United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

(Sixteenth and seventeenth sessions)

General Assembly
Official Records • Fifty-second Session
Supplement No.38 (A/52/38/Rev.1)

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Part One

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

31 January 1997

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its sixteenth session from 13 to 31 January 1997 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 333rd meeting, on 31 January. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(*Signed*) Salma KHAN
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination of
Discrimination against Women

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF STATES PARTIES

A. Decisions*

Decision 16/I. Concluding comments

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that its concluding comments would continue to follow the standard pattern that it had introduced at its fifteenth session. Concluding comments would contain an introduction; a section on factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as appropriate; a section on positive aspects organized in the order of the articles of the Convention; and a section identifying principal areas of concern, described in order of the importance of each particular issue in the State party under consideration. The final part of the comments, the suggestions and recommendations, would provide concrete suggestions from the Committee with regard to the problems identified in the comments.

Decision 16/II. Non-governmental organizations

The Committee decided to invite the United Nations Secretariat to facilitate an informal meeting with non-governmental organizations outside the regular meeting time of the Committee. During that meeting, non-governmental organizations would be invited to offer country-specific information on the States parties to be reviewed by the Committee. The Committee recommended that States parties consult national non-governmental organizations in the preparation of their reports required by article 18 of the Convention. It recommended that international non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes be encouraged to facilitate attendance at Committee sessions by representatives of national non-governmental organizations. It also recommended that specialized agencies and other United Nations entities with field representation work with non-governmental organizations to disseminate information on the Convention and on the work of the Committee and to call upon past and present experts of the Committee to participate in those efforts.

Decision 16/III. Reports of States parties

In order to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration and to encourage States parties to report in a timely fashion, the Committee decided, on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure, to invite States parties to combine a maximum of two of the reports required under article 18 of the Convention.

B. Suggestions*

Suggestion 16/1. Technical and advisory services

The Committee suggested that the budget of the Centre for Human Rights of the United Nations Secretariat for technical and advisory services be made available to promote the Convention and the work of the Committee, and to facilitate seminars on such issues as reservations. A small working group of Committee members would be convened at its seventeenth session to conceptualize those seminars and, inter alia, to examine funding requirements. The Committee further recommended that the expertise of its past and present experts be drawn upon in that connection.

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* For the discussion, see chap. V below.

Suggestion 16/2. Pre-session working group

The Committee proposed that, starting from its seventeenth session, its pre-session working group be convened at the end of the session prior to the one at which selected States parties would report in order to provide States parties presenting periodic reports with the Committee's questions well in advance.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 31 January 1997, the closing date of the sixteenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 155 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I to the present report.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its sixteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 13 to 31 January 1997. The Committee held 24 plenary meetings (310th to 333rd), and its two working groups held 7 meetings.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Ivanka Corti (Italy), who had been re-elected at the fourteenth session of the Committee, in January 1995.

5. In her opening statement, the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women welcomed the new members of the Committee elected at the ninth meeting of the States parties to the Convention, in February 1996, and congratulated the five new members who had been elected at that meeting. She expressed her gratitude to the experts whose terms had ended in 1996.

6. She said the sixteenth session of the Committee came at an important time in the life of the United Nations, just after the appointment of the new Secretary-General and at the beginning of the year that marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Commission on the Status of Women. It also came after an important cycle of United Nations conferences that had solidified links among all parts of the United Nations system, Member States, civil society and non-governmental organizations, setting the stage for further consolidating action and implementation by those actors.

7. She stated that the Committee was encouraged by the steady increase in the number of States that had ratified or acceded to the Convention; that number had reached 155, making universal ratification by the year 2000 an achievable goal. Since the fifteenth session, Algeria, Andorra, Botswana and Pakistan had become States parties. She explained that although the Convention continued to be subject to a large number of reservations, some of which were far-reaching, progress had also been achieved in that regard. She referred to General Assembly resolution 51/68 of 12 December 1996, in which the Assembly urged States to limit the extent of any reservation they lodged to ensure that no reservations were incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention or otherwise incompatible with international treaty law and to review their reservations regularly, with a view to withdrawing them. Referring to the Committee's meeting time as provided in article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention, she recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 50/202 of

22 December 1995, had approved an amendment to that article which was subject to the approval of two thirds of the States parties to the Convention. As at 10 January 1997, 11 States parties had accepted the amendment. She further explained that in its resolution 51/68, the General Assembly had approved the Committee's holding, in the interim, two sessions annually, each of three weeks' duration. She informed the Committee that that arrangement would begin with the seventeenth session of the Committee, which would be held from 7 to 25 July 1997, preceded by a pre-session working group from 30 June to 3 July 1997.

8. The Director described positive steps that were being taken by the Secretariat, including encouraging States parties that had not submitted reports to the Committee to do so in a timely fashion and measures that would encourage States parties to act in the spirit of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women[1] and regularize their reporting obligations by the year 2000. She also indicated that concrete efforts continued to be made to develop a complaints mechanism in the form of an optional protocol to the Convention. She recalled that during the fortieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 1996, an open-ended working group of the Commission had discussed the elements of such a protocol, on the basis of suggestion 7 made by the Committee at its fourteenth session, in 1995.[2] The working group would continue its work during the Commission's forty-first session.

9. Under agenda item 8, she proposed that the Committee take up, in a preliminary way, the revised draft of the rules of procedure, which would then be taken up in detail at the seventeenth session. The Committee, at its present session, would discuss the question of its relations with non-governmental organizations and the working methods of the Committee. It would also be considering its working relations with other human rights treaty bodies, special thematic rapporteurs, including the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and country rapporteurs. She wished the Committee well in its efforts to monitor the implementation of the Convention and to develop general recommendations as an important tool, noting that at the present session it would continue its drafting of a general recommendation on articles 7 and 8.

C. Attendance

10. All members of the Committee attended the sixteenth session, with the exception of Ms. Desiree P. Bernard, Ms. Sunaryati Hartono and Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis. Ms. Mervat Tallawy attended from 17 to 31 January, Ms. Ginko Sato from 19 to 31 January and Ms. Yung-Chung Kim from 13 to 17 January 1997.

11. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, appears in annex II to the present report.

D. Solemn declaration

12. At the opening of the sixteenth session, before assuming their functions, the newly elected members, Ms. Ayse Feride Acar (Turkey), Ms. Yolanda Ferrer Gómez (Cuba), Ms. Aída González Martínez (Mexico), Ms. Yung-Chung Kim (Republic of Korea) and Ms. Anne Lise Ryel (Norway), and five of the six re-elected members, Ms. Carlota Bustelo (Spain), Ms. Silvia R. Cartwright (New Zealand), Ms. Salma Khan (Bangladesh),

Ms. Ahoua Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) and Ms. Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling (Germany), made the solemn declaration as provided for under rule 10 of the rules of procedure of the Committee. Being absent from the sixteenth session, Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis (Ethiopia) was unable to make the solemn declaration.

E. Election of officers

13. At its 310th meeting, on 13 January 1997, the Committee elected the following officers for a term of two years (1997-1998) by acclamation, in accordance with article 19 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and rules 13 and 14 of the Committee's rules of procedure: Ms. Salma Khan (Bangladesh), Chairperson; Ms. Charlotte Abaka (Ghana), Ms. Carlota Bustelo (Spain) and Ms. Miriam Estrada (Ecuador), Vice-Chairpersons; and Ms. Aurora Javate de Dios (Philippines), Rapporteur.

F. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

14. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1997/1) at its 310th meeting, on 13 January 1997. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Solemn declaration by the new members of the Committee.
3. Election of officers.
4. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
5. Report of the Chairperson on the activities undertaken between the fifteenth and sixteenth sessions of the Committee and consideration of the report of the seventh meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies and action taken by the General Assembly concerning treaty bodies.
6. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties and article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
8. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
9. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session.

G. Report of the pre-session working group

15. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session,[3] to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of questions relating to second and subsequent periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session. The Committee decided that its members should

submit to the Secretariat the draft questions on specific countries and articles of the Convention prior to the meeting of the working group.

16. The Committee had decided at its fifteenth session[4] that the following four members, representing different regional groups, would participate in the working group: Ivanka Corti (Europe), Tendai Ruth Bare (Africa), Aurora Javate de Dios (Asia and the Pacific) and Miriam Estrada (Latin America and the Caribbean).

17. In accordance with the provisional agenda of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1997/1), the working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the reports of five States parties, to be sent to the Governments of Canada, Denmark, the Philippines, Turkey and Venezuela.

18. The pre-session working group noted that the majority of the reports it reviewed followed the Committee's guidelines for the presentation of reports. This allowed the working group to assess the progress made by States parties in implementing the Convention since the State's previous report to the Committee. The working group appealed to States parties to continue to follow the Committee's guidelines for the presentation of reports so as to expedite the work of the pre-session group and to allow it to analyse the progress of individual States parties in greater depth. The group also noted that the majority of the reports to be reviewed by the pre-session working group had been prepared prior to the Fourth World Conference on Women. Thus, the revised reporting guidelines provided by the Committee and revised at its fifteenth session did not apply. Nevertheless, the pre-session working group took the opportunity to raise questions relating to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the commitments undertaken by each State party during the Conference.

19. At the 320th meeting, on 20 January 1997, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group introduced the report of the group (CEDAW/C/1997/CRP.1 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5), indicating that questions regarding reports had been submitted by Committee members. She regretted the fact that not all members had taken the opportunity to submit written questions in advance and stated that that procedure was important for the formulation of concluding comments and that it enhanced the work of the group, which met for only a short time.

20. The Chairperson of the working group indicated that most States parties had followed the Committee's guidelines, but recommended that States parties that had not followed them be requested to do so when next reporting. She also made it clear that some progress in implementation could be discerned in the periodic reports.

21. The Chairperson of the working group made it clear that the working group had been given full support by the Secretariat and drew the Committee's attention to the discussion the working group had had with the Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women concerning the methods of work of the group. She noted that the Secretariat would, in future, integrate questions sent by experts and classify them in advance, which would allow the group to discuss implementation in greater depth.

22. The Chairperson suggested that, at future sessions, the pre-session working group might meet with non-governmental organizations to conduct a thematic discussion on a particular area. She suggested that Working Group I should discuss the role of the pre-session, in particular given that the Committee

would now have two sessions per year. She suggested that reports for consideration by the Committee would now need to be identified two sessions in advance and that it might well be more appropriate for the pre-session to be held at the end of the previous session, as is the practice of some other human rights treaty bodies. In addition, she raised the question of specialization of Committee members and the use of concluding comments in future consideration of implementation of the Convention in individual States parties.

23. A number of members of the Committee commented on the suggestions put forward by the Chairperson of the working group. One member suggested that if the group met at the end of the previous session, the work of the States parties and non-governmental organizations would be facilitated and a dialogue could be entered into with States parties.

24. One member suggested that there was no reason to employ different procedures for initial and periodic reports. Other members suggested that the most difficult task was to compare first and periodic reports. Another suggested that the pre-session working group, which met before the current session, should have reviewed reports selected for consideration for the July session, as that would allow for richer questions from the Committee, give non-governmental organizations an opportunity to intervene and States parties time to answer the questions. It was stressed that as the working group consisted of only four members of the Committee, all other Committee members should send their questions with regard to periodic reports well in advance so that they could be integrated by the Secretariat. She also urged the dispatch of non-governmental organization reports well in advance.

25. The Chairperson of the pre-session working group explained that in previous sessions the Committee had decided not to consider initial reports in the working group because it was important to establish a direct constructive dialogue with the State party. She noted that the Committee's concluding comments facilitated the maintenance of that dialogue and urged that those formulated at the current session should follow the articles of the Convention and be as complete as possible. She noted that the concluding comments were an invaluable basis for the consideration of the subsequent report of the States parties.

26. A number of members suggested that the pre-session working group should continue to review periodic reports only and not initial reports. Several also urged the development of specialization among Committee members, making it clear that specialization would not preclude general discussion. Support was expressed for specialization, and it was suggested that experts should identify annually the area in which they wished to specialize.

27. Other members urged that reports be selected 12 months in advance of consideration and that they be considered by a working group at the session prior to the one at which they are to be considered by the Committee. In that context, one member suggested that the analysis of reports provided by the Secretariat be simplified and that they contain the text of reservations entered by the State party concerned, amendments and withdrawal notices and the concluding comments of the Committee and other treaty bodies with regard to the State.

28. It was noted that the Committee required more organized procedures and that steps were needed to ensure that questions for the State party concerned were sent well in advance so that written replies could be provided, allowing the Committee duly to discuss issues with the State party. Some members noted that

the Committee was a large one and that members should speak once, rather than repeating questions already posed. The Committee concluded that the issues raised were properly the province of Working Group I, but that if a decision were made to change the procedures of the Committee, some bridging measures would be required. In that context, it was suggested that the guidelines for reporting might warrant revision, as might the Committee's methods of work.

H. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

29. At its 311th meeting, on 13 January 1997, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing working groups: Working Group I, to consider ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, and Working Group II, to consider ways and means of implementing article 21 of the Convention.

30. Working Group I was composed of the following members of the Committee: Ivanka Corti, Miriam Estrada, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González, Salma Khan, Lin Shangzhen, Ahoua Ouedraogo and Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling.

31. Working Group II was composed of the following members of the Committee: Charlotte Abaka, Ayse Feride Acar, Emna Aouij, Tendai Ruth Bare, Carlota Bustelo, Silvia R. Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González, Aurora Javate de Dios, Salma Khan, Yung-Chung Kim, Anne Lise Ryel and Carmel Shalev.

Notes

[1] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 2, annex II.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/50/38), chap. I, sect. B.

[3] Ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 and corrigendum (A/45/38 and Corr.1), paras. 28-31.

[4] Ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/51/38), para. 348.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

32. The former Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Ivanka Corti, reported on her activities as Chairperson since the fifteenth session of the Committee. She also reflected on developments with regard to the Committee which had occurred during the four-year period of her chairpersonship.

33. Ms. Corti indicated that since the fifteenth session she had participated in the celebration of International Women's Day at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), where she took part in a round table on violence against women in all its forms. She also participated in a seminar on violence against women hosted by the French Ministry of Justice, held from 8 to 10 March 1996. Moreover, she participated in two training sessions at the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Training Centre in Turin, as well as conferences of non-governmental organizations in Venice and Tunis.

34. Ms. Corti had also attended the fortieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women as an observer, in particular, the meetings held during the session of the open-ended working group on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol, which she described to the members of the Committee. She indicated that both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council had adopted resolutions providing for the attendance of a member of the Committee as a resource person at the meetings of the optional protocol working group at the forty-first session of the Commission.

35. Ms. Corti briefed members of the Committee on the meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies held at the Centre for Human Rights in September 1996, at which she had also been elected chairperson. Topics discussed at the meeting included the relationship of specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies with treaty bodies and the role of non-governmental organizations in the work of those bodies.

36. Ms. Corti discussed the steps she had taken during the year to promote links between the Committee on the one hand and the specialized agencies and other bodies of the United Nations system on the other. She and three other members of the Committee had participated in a joint meeting with the Committee on the Rights of the Child sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) held at Cairo from 18 to 20 November 1996. The meeting constituted an important step towards strengthened cooperation among the human rights treaty bodies. The former Chairperson also reported on the meeting with the Executive Director of UNICEF, at which concrete proposals for future cooperation with the Committee were put forward.

37. Ms. Corti reminded the Committee of the suggestion she had made to the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), following the International Conference on Population and Development that UNFPA should work with the Committee to consider the human rights implications of the Conference's Programme of Action and its relevance to the work of the Committee and the human rights treaty bodies. Those suggestions resulted in the round table on human rights approaches to women's health, with a focus on reproductive and sexual health rights, co-sponsored by UNFPA, the Division for the Advancement of Women, and the Office the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and held at Glen Cove, New York, from 9 to 11 December 1996. This was the first such

meeting of chairpersons of treaty bodies on thematic issues. It was followed by further discussions between the Executive Director and members of the Committee. Ms. Corti also commended the steps that had been taken by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) to promote both the Convention and the Committee.

38. Expressing the view that she had felt honoured to represent such an extraordinary committee of women devoted to the defence of women's human rights, Ms. Corti recalled that when she first assumed the chairpersonship of the Committee, measures were needed to make the Convention and the Committee better known. The Vienna, Cairo and Beijing conferences had provided an important framework for that work. She pointed to the various achievements of the Committee during this period, beginning with the formulation, with UNESCO, of the manifesto "Towards a Gender-inclusive Culture through Education". She reminded members of the extraordinary one-week session organized by a State party (Spain) in May 1995, and the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention. She noted the growing interest of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Committee, specifically mentioning the participation of a number of Committee members in workshops at the Non-governmental Organization Forum of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the work of the International Women's Rights Action Watch, the International Human Rights Law Clinic of the City University of New York Law School and the International Human Rights Law Group in promoting the Convention and supporting the work of the Committee. She also described in that context the Round Table on Women's Health as a Human Right, organized by the Commonwealth Medical Association at Toronto in October 1996, in which members of the Committee participated.

39. Ms. Corti drew attention to developments in various areas of the Committee's work during her chairpersonship. She noted in particular general recommendation 21 on equality in marriage and family relations[1] and the fact that the Committee had updated its reporting guidelines at its fifteenth session to take account of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995.

40. Ms. Corti congratulated Ms. Khan on her election as Chairperson and noted that her task would be a challenging one. She reminded members that the Committee would now meet twice yearly and that its work required rationalization. Steps needed to be taken to reduce the backlog of reports awaiting consideration by the Committee and to establish permanent relations with non-governmental organizations and encourage their greater involvement in the Committee's work. The new rules of procedure required finalization, and a permanent relationship needed to be forged with the non-treaty human rights mechanism, and in particular, with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women. She noted the importance of the establishment of the Women's Rights Unit in the Division for the Advancement of Women and the appointment of the Chief of that section, whom she encouraged to maintain close links with the Chairperson of the Committee.

41. Finally, Ms. Corti thanked current and former Committee members, the members of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the staff of the Centre for Human Rights, non-governmental organizations and the various academics who had contributed to the popularization and appreciation of the Convention. In conclusion, she expressed appreciation for the solidarity of all women, which was fundamental to the Committee's success.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/49/38), chap. I, sect. A.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

A. Introduction

42. At its sixteenth session, the Committee considered the reports submitted by eight States parties under article 18 of the Convention: two initial and one combined initial, second and third periodic report; one combined second and third periodic report; two third periodic reports; and two combined third and fourth periodic reports. The Committee also considered one report submitted on an exceptional basis.

43. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on each report considered.

44. The Committee's concluding comments on the reports of States parties, as prepared respectively by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentations by the representatives of the States parties are provided below. The summary records provide more detailed information on the Committee's consideration of the reports of the States parties.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Morocco

45. The Committee considered the initial report of Morocco (CEDAW/C/MOR/1) at its 312th, 313th and 320th meetings, on 14 and 20 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.312, 313 and 320).

46. In introducing the report, the representative of Morocco informed the Committee that Morocco's initial report had been submitted to the Secretariat in July 1994 in accordance with article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, one year after Morocco had acceded to the Convention. King Hassan II had taken the initiative in 1992 and had invited various women's associations to submit amendments to the existing Personal Status Code in order to eliminate the obstacles impeding Moroccan women from the enjoyment and exercise of their rights. A number of articles of the Personal Status Code were amended accordingly and in conformity with various international agreements and instruments, while the Code maintained its respect for the principles of Islamic law, the shariah.

47. The representative pointed out that the initial report described institutional, legal, administrative and other measures taken to promote and protect the human rights of women within an overall political and legal framework. The Government of Morocco linked the status of women to human rights and recognized the inseparable links between the respect for human rights, democracy and social, economic and cultural development. The human rights protection aspects of the elimination of discrimination against women and the advancement of women were transferred from the social affairs ministries to the Ministry of Human Rights, which was working in cooperation with other ministerial departments on these issues.

48. The Constitution, revised in 1992 and 1996, now contained provisions intended to ensure a greater respect for human rights in general and for the human rights of women in particular. The revised Constitution established a bicameral parliament and also allowed for the establishment of fact-finding commissions to address the elimination of discrimination against women. As a result of the reform of Morocco's family law, any case of discrimination against women could now result in legal proceedings.

49. The representative then briefed the Committee on legal and administrative measures that had been taken in his country to achieve equality between women and men within the framework of promotion and protection of women's human rights. The legislation relating to employment, as well as the Penal Code, had been modified. Efforts had been made, especially in the field of education and employment. The Government was concerned about the high rate of illiteracy among women, and it considered women in rural areas the most vulnerable group. A literacy campaign had therefore been launched with the goal of reducing the illiteracy rate to 10 per cent by the year 2010, specifically among rural women. However, while all citizens had an equal right to education and employment, pursuant to article 13 of the Constitution, the representative acknowledged that there existed a number of statutory exceptions that excluded women from entering certain professions.

50. In concluding his presentation, the representative of Morocco recognized that there were still a number of barriers preventing women from exercising and enjoying their human rights and participating fully in the socio-economic development of the country, but he assured the Committee of his Government's willingness to pursue the task of eliminating all such obstacles.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

51. The Committee thanked the State party for its report, which had been submitted on time. It noted, however, that the format of the written report had not adhered to the Committee's guidelines. The State party had nevertheless established a frank and constructive dialogue with the Committee through its oral report and its replies.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

52. The Committee was of the view that, although the instrument of ratification of the Convention by the Kingdom of Morocco was in itself an important event, the fact that it had been accompanied by declarations and reservations concerning the substance of the Convention seriously hindered the latter's implementation.

53. The Committee noted the obvious contradictions between the obligations deriving from the undertaking made by the State party at the time of signing the Convention and the persistence of considerable discrimination against women in Morocco, particularly in the field of family law.

Positive aspects

54. The Committee noted with satisfaction the revision of the Constitution, which strengthened the rule of law in Morocco by solemnly proclaiming the country's commitment to internationally recognized human rights.

55. The Committee believed that that undertaking by the State would inevitably benefit women, since women's rights were an integral part of human rights.

56. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the women's unit set up within the Ministry of Human Rights was involved in the overall process initiated by Morocco in that regard.

57. The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the State party to revise and amend the Personal Status Code (Moudouana). Those preliminary efforts reflected the political determination of the State party, at the highest level, to further the development of the legal status of women.

58. The Committee noted with satisfaction the emergence of a women's movement which had managed to give expression to women's demands and to give their concerns a national dimension.

Principal areas of concern

59. The Committee was deeply concerned at the number and importance of the reservations made by Morocco, particularly the reservation to article 2, one of the Convention's central articles. The Committee considers any reservation to that article to be contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention and incompatible with international law. The Committee was likewise concerned that the combination of reservations to articles 2 and 15 leave no room for evolving concepts of Islamic law.

60. The Committee noted with regret that the State party did not envisage withdrawing any of its reservations.

61. The Committee also noted that, unlike other international treaties, the Convention had not been mentioned, publicized or published in the Official Gazette.

62. The Committee expressed regret that there was no specific women's rights machinery that could coordinate and guide activities and projects for women in order to improve and better inform women of their rights.

63. The Committee expressed concern that, despite the efforts made in the political sphere, women's representation at the policy-making level was minimal.

64. The Committee emphasized that cultural characteristics could not be allowed to undermine the principle of the universality of human rights, which remained inalienable and non-negotiable, nor to prevent the adoption of appropriate measures in favour of women. As a result, the Committee remained concerned at the profound inequalities affecting the status of women in Morocco. Considerable discrimination in the areas of marriage, conjugal relations, divorce and the custody of children still exists. Laws regarding the punishment of adultery and the ability to pass on nationality continue to benefit the husband to the detriment of the wife.

65. The Committee emphasized that discrimination was not limited to the private sphere but also affected the public realm. Blatant inequalities could be observed in women's recruitment, wages and leave entitlements, as well as in legal restrictions on women's, but not men's, employment, which reflected stereotypical attitudes regarding appropriate work for women.

66. The Committee noted with concern that no legislation was envisaged to protect women against all forms of violence. The Committee was also surprised that the report made no mention of article 6 of the Convention, which concerned prostitution.

67. The Committee was concerned at the high rate of female illiteracy, which affected girls and rural women in particular.

68. The Committee noted with concern the high rate of maternal mortality in Morocco, the high number of unattended births, the unavailability of safe abortion and the need to develop further reproductive and sexual health services, including family planning.

Suggestions and recommendations

69. The Committee recommended that the State party incorporate the principle of equality between men and women into all spheres of life and into the Constitution, and that it bring the Constitution into line with the relevant international norms of the Convention.

70. The Committee expressed the hope that the Government would envisage, through the political will of its leaders, the progressive withdrawal of the many reservations that were seriously undermining the proper implementation of the Convention.

71. The Committee strongly recommended that the Government continue its efforts to amend legislation that was still discriminatory in order to bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention. While respecting the stages in Morocco's political, economic, sociological and cultural evolution and the need for the population to support any reform concerning women's rights, the Committee encouraged the Government to persevere in using ijtihad, which was the evolving interpretation of religious texts so as to give the necessary impetus to the improvement of the status of women and thus gradually to change attitudes.

72. The Committee recommended the establishment of specific machinery located at the highest policy level, with adequate financial and human resources, that would coordinate and guide action in favour of women, would be able to prevent the persistence of attitudes, prejudices and stereotypes that discriminate against women and would narrow the gap between de jure and de facto equality.

73. The Committee further recommended that education in women's rights, covering national and international legislation, be provided in all schools and university systems and to women's associations and non-governmental organizations, as well as in rural areas.

74. The Committee recommended that the competent national bodies, the women's sections of the different political parties and associations and non-governmental organizations do their utmost to bring about as great a change in men's traditional role in the family and in society as in women's, so as to ensure genuine equality of opportunity between men and women in all spheres. It observed that revising the content and orientation of school textbooks in order to eliminate stereotypes and negative images of women could help to speed up a change of mentality and remove certain obstacles.

75. The Committee also asked the Government to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, women heads of household, abandoned women and disabled women,

and to take the necessary steps to protect them from any form of exclusion or marginalization. Overcoming inequality contributed to poverty reduction and to the country's economic development.

76. The Committee recommended to the Government that appropriate, effective measures be taken to reduce both the illiteracy rate and the maternal mortality rate, which were high in rural areas.

77. The Committee urged the Government to address the issue of violence against women, to adopt the necessary measures to overcome this phenomenon and to establish support services for victims of violence, in both urban and rural areas, in accordance with general recommendation 19.

78. The Committee strongly recommended that the Government take special measures to reduce maternal mortality rates and protect women's right to life by ensuring full and timely access of all women to emergency obstetric care.

79. The Committee recommended that the Government review existing restrictions on women's access to employment, particularly those based on stereotypical assumptions concerning women's work.

80. The Committee requested the Government of Morocco to address the concerns included in the present concluding comments in its next report, to include information on the implementation of the Committee's general recommendations and to follow the Committee's reporting guidelines carefully, including with regard to the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action. It requested the Government to provide statistical data disaggregated by sex with regard to all areas in the Convention in its next report. In particular, it requested the wide dissemination of these comments throughout Morocco.

Slovenia

81. The Committee considered the initial report of Slovenia (CEDAW/C/SVN/1) at its 314th, 315th and 321st meetings, on 15 and 20 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.314, 315 and 321).

82. The report was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, who emphasized the importance his Government attaches to the international human rights treaties and in particular to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and expressed its support for an early adoption of the optional protocol to the Convention.

83. The Director of the Office for Women's Policy of Slovenia then proceeded to provide an update of Slovenia's initial report, submitted to the Secretariat in 1993 in accordance with article 18 of the Convention. She noted that the report had been prepared during a period of economic and political restructuring by the Office and in cooperation with the responsible ministries and other institutions, including non-governmental organizations. The impact of the transition on women could not yet be fully assessed, but Slovenia had prepared an updated report as an appendix to the initial report, which it had submitted to the Committee early in 1997. The information provided in that document allows some initial assessment in this regard.

84. The Committee was informed that the Office for Women's Policy had been created during the early stage of transition from socialism to parliamentary democracy. It had been established by the Government in July 1992 as the

central policy coordinating unit of the Government responsible for implementing the rights of women guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and international agreements. The Office was an important step forward in the integration of the principle of gender equality into government policies.

85. The representative of Slovenia outlined the political, economic and legal situation in Slovenia and its impact on the de facto status of women. Slovenia is a country in transition which has preserved a relatively high degree of social protection in an environment of economic stability and growth. Unemployment and other problems of transition have affected women but to a lesser degree than men. The Committee took note of the general circumstances and focused on the specific issues pertaining to the questions of the rights of women. The Committee also took note of how the rights of women were guaranteed and protected by the Constitution, to what extent Slovene women were involved in political decision-making and how they had been participating in ongoing democratization.

86. The Government of Slovenia was particularly concerned about the prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes and certain forms of de facto discrimination against women. With regard to education, it was reported that while women enjoyed a high level of education in general, there were clear differences in what women and men preferred to study, with women concentrated in traditionally female subjects. Women, especially the young and educated, were facing difficulties in finding employment. The Slovene pension system benefited women and men differently. Women's generally lower pensions were a reflection of the lower-paid sectors in which women were employed and the frequent leave they took in order to care for their children. Despite the law that guarantees the right of both parents to take parental leave, fathers still failed to play an equal role in the care and education of children. With regard to women's reproductive health, it was noted that the right to abortion was guaranteed by the Constitution, however, the Committee was alerted to the high rate of abortion, despite the wide and legal availability of contraception and contraceptive advice.

87. In concluding the presentation, the representative of Slovenia recognized that much remained to be done to achieve full equality between women and men, and assured the Committee of the willingness of her Government to undertake all the necessary measures to achieve the principles established in the Convention.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

88. The Committee welcomed the high-level representation of the Government of Slovenia and applauded the fact that, after gaining its independence, the Government had quickly accepted the international human rights obligations assumed by the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It commended the Government for its timely submission of a well-structured, informative and honest report, which followed the reporting guidelines of the Committee and gave a frank picture of the situation of women in Slovenia. It also welcomed the additional collection of statistical data, which were comprehensive in certain areas and were disaggregated by sex, as well as the extensive answers to the Committee's questions, which were given in both oral and written form. The Committee also took note of the support of the Government of Slovenia to the formulation of an optional protocol to the Convention and applauded the fact that an action plan was being prepared to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

89. The Committee was aware of the difficulties Slovenia was facing as a result of the transition towards democracy and a social/market economy and the need to build a different civil society. Many of those difficulties could and did have a negative impact on the situation of women in Slovenia and thus impeded the legal and practical implementation of the Convention. The Committee was also aware that sex-role stereotypes relating to the nature of women and men and the "appropriate" work for each sex were pervasive in Slovene society. Those stereotypes had not been questioned under the former political system, despite its adherence to formal equality between women and men.

Positive aspects

90. The Committee welcomed the sensitivity towards gender issues expressed by the Government of Slovenia and by certain sectors of the newly emerging civil society, in particular in the number of non-governmental organizations for women.

91. The Committee noted with satisfaction the extensive human rights guarantees in the Slovene Constitution, in particular those guarantees relating to the human rights of women. It welcomed the fact that the Convention took precedence over national legislation. The immediate effect of the Convention in the Slovene legal system and legislation providing women with de jure equality were welcomed by the Committee, as was the integration of human rights principles into its ongoing process of legislative reform and into its newly formulated policies.

92. The Committee commended the active role of the women's machinery, the Office for Women's Policy, founded in 1992, which operated as an independent government advisory service advising the Government on legislation, policies and programmes and which, through campaigns and programmes, sought to improve gender sensitivity in the population.

93. The Committee welcomed the efforts of the Government to eliminate stereotyped images of women in the media and in advertising, as well as the National Programme for Households, which aimed at helping young women and men to share work and family responsibilities in a non-stereotypical way.

94. The Committee noted that the Government of Slovenia was aware of the widespread violence against women in the private sphere and that it was developing, through its national machinery and by supporting non-governmental organizations that act on behalf of women, measures to combat that violence and to assist victims. It also commended the steps towards new legislation to protect prostitutes.

95. The Committee applauded the temporary special efforts of the Office for Women's Policies to raise public awareness and to introduce measures to increase women's representation in Parliament. It noted with satisfaction the high number of women in the judiciary and the promising figures of women's enrolment in the faculties of law at Slovene universities. It also noted the significant representation of women in high-level administrative jobs. It applauded the fact that a large number of non-governmental organizations for women had been formed in a relatively short time and the cooperation fostered by the Office for Women's Policies with non-governmental organizations, in particular during the preparation of the report and in the formulation of the National Platform of Action, the aim of which was to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

96. The Committee commended the Government on the high level of women's education in Slovenia, on envisioned educational reforms and on the efforts that had been made to include human rights education at various levels of the school curriculum. It noted with satisfaction that courses in women's studies were offered at some universities and that research on the impact of the depiction of women in textbooks was being carried out.

97. The Committee took note of the existence of a formal day-care system that provides day care to slightly more than 50 per cent of children up to the age of six. The Committee welcomed the revision of the existing labour legislation and the formulation of new equality provisions in that legislative area. It also welcomed the fact that in labour legislation, the principle of equal pay for equal work and for work of equal value would be considered. It noted with satisfaction that a high percentage of women were employed. It welcomed the envisioned provisions against sexist language in job classifications and advertisements and noted with satisfaction the discussion of a legislative proposal on parental leave that would give a greater share of responsibility to fathers.

98. The Committee noted with satisfaction the inclusion of the right to abortion in the Constitution of Slovenia.

Principal areas of concern

99. The Committee was concerned that the Office for Women's Policies had an advisory role only and was, therefore, dependent on the political will of the Government. It was concerned that the human and financial resources of the Office might be too small considering the tasks it had to tackle.

100. The Committee also noted with concern the pervasiveness and entrenched nature of sex-role stereotypes and pointed to the risk that such stereotypes might be strengthened because of the difficult economic, social and cultural changes the population of Slovenia was facing. The Committee was of the view that one of the results of sex-role stereotyping was that women performed most of the household work and thus had a double burden of work.

101. Concern was also expressed as to whether the real extent of violence against women was being discovered and whether the current measures were sufficient not only to combat it, but also to assist its victims. The Committee was concerned that the Government should ensure that victims of violence receive support from the police, understanding of the dynamics of violence against women from judges, counselling and placement in shelters and, in particular, that they be assisted in rebuilding their lives.

102. The Committee noted with great concern that the number of women represented in politics was falling despite the various measures that had been undertaken in that sphere.

103. The Committee was concerned about the clustering of female students in certain disciplines, at both schools and universities, that did not provide optimum employment opportunities.

104. The Committee was concerned that less than 30 per cent of children under three years of age and slightly more than half of all children between three and six were in formal day care, and that the remaining children, while cared for by family members and other private individuals, might miss out on educational and social opportunities offered in formal day-care institutions.

105. The Committee noted with concern that women were clustered in certain jobs and professions and at certain job levels. It noted the feminization of the medical profession and the low wages in that sector. It was alarmed by the high number of young unemployed women who were looking for a first job and was aware that failure to find such employment might confine women to the role of homemaker. In that context, the Committee took account of the unfortunate fact that market economies tended to favour male employees who, by virtue of traditional roles and work allocation, were deemed to be unencumbered by family responsibilities.

106. The Committee was concerned that temporary work for women might be institutionalized and that women would thus be marginalized in the labour market and become victims of indirect discrimination. It was also concerned that occupational health standards for women might result in discrimination against women in employment.

107. The Committee noted with concern the very high number of abortions and the corresponding low use of contraception. Concern was also voiced with respect to the large numbers of single-parent families, which were usually headed by women.

Suggestions and recommendations

108. The Committee recommended that the ongoing revision of laws should take account of hidden, indirect and structural discrimination and that sufficient attention should be paid to the formulation of temporary special measures in the fields of politics, education, employment and the implementation of de jure and de facto equality for women. It recommended that the judiciary be made aware of the meaning of indirect and structural discrimination, de facto equality and the concept of temporary special measures.

109. The Committee suggested that the Government of Slovenia, as well as the non-governmental organizations for women, should be aware that the concept of privacy of family life and the reproductive role of women could be utilized to hide violence against women and reinforce sex-role stereotypes.

110. The Committee recommended the establishment of the proposed gender equality ombudsperson.

111. It recommended the establishment of a formal complaint procedure and a formal evaluation board outside the Chamber of Commerce, which would include all sectors of society, to address sexist advertisements. That procedure should incorporate sanctions against offending advertising agents.

112. The Committee recommended new efforts directed at the political education of women and men and of political parties in order to ensure more effective temporary measures that would increase the representation of women at all levels of political life.

113. The Committee suggested that the Government of Slovenia make systematic efforts to ensure that women students are encouraged to enter diverse disciplines so as to overcome the clustering of female students in certain disciplines at schools and universities. Such measures could include special counselling and gender-specific temporary measures with numerical goals and timetables. It also recommended that women's studies be formally established at universities and made part of the school curriculum. The Committee suggested that the Government of Slovenia review its gender-neutral educational framework

and develop positive measures to counteract hidden stereotypical educational messages and practices.

114. The Committee recommended the creation of more formal and institutionalized child-care establishments for children under three years of age as well as for those from three to six.

115. The Committee strongly recommended that revised labour legislation contain equality and anti-discrimination provisions and strong sanctions for non-compliance. It also recommended temporary special measures with concrete numerical goals and timetables in order to overcome employment segregation. The Committee strongly recommended the adoption of parental leave legislation in which part of the leave must be taken by the father.

116. The Committee encouraged the Government to create assistance programmes for women who wished to start their own businesses, to educate banks and other relevant institutions about women's capacities in that area, to create specific government-subsidized employment opportunities for young women and to address their unemployment with specific measures, including quotas related to their percentage of the unemployed population.

117. The Committee also recommended measures be put in place to expedite the collection of data in the health sector so as to provide the basis for legislation, policies and programmes.

118. The Committee recommended that current efforts to restructure the financial systems underlying health care and social security benefits, including pensions, should be designed to avoid detrimental effects on women as wage earners and beneficiaries in those sectors.

119. The Committee suggested that there was a need to analyse the reasons for the high rate of abortion among Slovene women. It strongly recommended education for women and men on the full range of safe and reliable contraceptive methods, stressing the mutual responsibility of both sexes for family planning as well as recommending that such methods be widely available.

120. The Committee recommended that education for sexual and reproductive health cover gender relations and violence against women and that health-care professionals also be trained to identify cases of violence against women and to treat them appropriately.

121. The Committee recommended increased measures for the early detection and the preventive treatment of breast cancer.

122. The Committee urged the wide dissemination of the present concluding comments in Slovenia to make Slovenes aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard.

2. Combined initial, second and third periodic reports

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

123. The Committee considered the combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3 and Add.1) at its 316th, 317th and 322nd meetings, on 16 and 21 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.316, 317 and 322).

124. In introducing the reports, the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines apologized that the report submitted to the Committee in 1992 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) had been sent owing to an administrative error. The representative requested that the report submitted to the Committee in 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1) be considered as the principal report. She further indicated her willingness to clarify statements in the document dated 4 November 1991 of the International Women's Rights Action Watch.

125. The representative indicated that a number of legislative reforms, including the Domestic Violence Act and the Equal Pay Act, had been implemented since the submission of the report in 1994. A Family Court and legal aid had been introduced within that period as well. The representative indicated that treaties were not self-executing in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and, although there was no specific law against discrimination, a woman who was discriminated against might seek legal redress in the High Court under section 16 of the Constitution. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been seen as a major step in developing legally binding and internationally accepted principles aimed at achieving equal rights for women. Consequently the Government had introduced national legislation that conformed to the articles of the Convention.

126. The representative briefed the Committee on the administrative measures that had been taken to advance the status of women, including the establishment of a women's desk in 1984, which had subsequently been upgraded to the Department of Women's Affairs. The Department, along with the National Council of Women, was focused on establishing equality between women and men, proposing socially responsive legislation and implementing policies that favourably affected women.

127. The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressed concern with regard to several important socio-economic issues, including youth unemployment, the high rate of female migration, decreased export earnings in the agricultural sector, the high rate of pregnancy among pre-teenagers and adolescents, traditional socio-cultural attitudes reflecting stereotyped gender roles and the prevalence of domestic violence.

128. The representative stated that, while all citizens had an equal right to education, employment, political participation and representation, obstacles remained for women in tertiary education and there was occupational segregation in the labour market. A gender gap also persisted in public sector employment, particularly at decision-making levels and in political life. Women experienced limited access to credit and land ownership, particularly in the rural areas, despite the fact that they represented a high percentage of the agricultural labour force.

129. In concluding her presentation, the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines indicated that she eagerly anticipated questions that might be raised by the experts on the development of the status of women and pledged to take

appropriate actions on behalf of the women of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and in keeping with their needs.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

130. The Committee expressed appreciation for the frank presentation of the combined initial, second and third reports. The oral presentation complemented the comprehensive written reports. The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was commended for being one of the first countries that had ratified the Convention, and had done so without reservation. The Committee expressed its satisfaction with the well-structured reports that followed the reporting guidelines. The report format, with full text of the articles, followed by relevant comments, was a good practice and made the report a very useful educational document. The report provided excellent data. However, the Committee regretted the lack of focus on how the status of women had progressed since the ratification in 1981 to date. It also regretted the delay in the presentation of the initial report. The report failed to make any reference to a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women or commitments made. There was also no information on implementation of the Committee's general recommendations.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

131. Under the legal system of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the Convention is not self-executing and it was necessary to enact legislation to give it full effect. Pervasive traditional, social, and cultural values, as well as generally accepted behaviour patterns, impede the advancement of women.

Positive aspects

132. The Committee appreciated the Government's efforts to conform to the provisions of the Convention by introducing several legal reforms. It was also appreciated that the Government and non-governmental organizations were collaborating in the implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

133. Legal measures that had been taken did not address all aspects of the Convention. Some existing domestic laws contravened the Convention. The Committee regretted that the Constitution did not specifically refer to the equality of women. It also regretted that the Convention had never been cited in any legal proceedings.

134. The Committee noted with concern that the Government had not made use of affirmative action measures to accelerate the unequal status of women, particularly in the areas of employment and public service.

135. The non-availability of shelter homes, which also provided victims with counselling services, was of concern to the Committee. Again, the Committee was very concerned about the persistent traditional, stereotypical roles and attitudes towards women and girls. Moreover, domestic violence was rampant, a fact that was also of great concern to the Committee.

136. The Committee noted with concern that no research had been undertaken on the real situation concerning prostitution and trafficking in women.

137. The low participation of women in the political parties and as candidates for election was of great concern to the Committee.

138. Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child and human rights in general were part of the school curriculum, the Committee was concerned that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was not taught in schools. The Committee was very concerned about the high rate of teenage and pre-teen pregnancy, which sometimes forced children to be mothers with very serious, negative consequences for their future, in particular, the interruption of their education.

139. The Committee was concerned about the very high rate of unemployment among women, which increased their vulnerability to domestic violence. It noted with concern that the Government had not made use of affirmative action to redress that problem. The Committee also expressed its concern about the feminization of migration.

140. The Committee was concerned that women had to seek spousal consent for tubal ligation. That contravened not only article 12, but also article 15 of the Convention. The Committee was also concerned that the law precluded safe abortion and prevented women from taking control of their reproductive health.

141. The Committee was concerned about the high rate of female migration outside Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the consequences it created in society.

Suggestions and recommendations

142. There was a need to review all domestic laws with the aim of identifying which should be amended and what new laws should be enacted in order for women to enjoy fully all the rights provided for under the Convention.

143. Subsequent reports must give information on the implementation of the Committee's general recommendations and concluding observations and also on follow-up programmes for the implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

144. The Committee also wanted to be apprised of the follow-up programmes to the Conference and the commitments made there by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to the implementation of the Convention.

145. The next report must indicate special measures that had been taken by the Government and the political parties to close the gap between de jure and de facto equality, particularly in the area of political decision-making and employment.

146. The next report should also provide more detailed information on prostitution and trafficking.

147. The Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, churches and all individuals and competent authorities, should introduce gender-sensitive reproductive and sexual health education, information and counselling in order to curb the very high rate of pre-teen and teenage pregnancy and should integrate reproductive and sexual health services, including family planning, into primary health care.

148. The law on abortion should be reviewed with a view to removing the penal provisions and in order to guarantee safe abortion and motherhood.

149. Government and the private sector must work towards creating job opportunities to help keep women in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines so that they could better contribute to the development of society in general.

150. The Committee urged the wide dissemination of the present concluding comments in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to make both women and men aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard. In addition, the Committee requested that the next report describe steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

3. Combined second and third periodic reports

Turkey

151. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Turkey (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3) at its 318th and 319th meetings, on 17 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.318 and 319).

152. In her introductory statement, the representative of Turkey pointed out that the report had been prepared in a participatory way and reflected the contributions of different women's organizations. She placed women's status within the framework of globalization, which seemed to offer new hopes, but also the possibility of growing inequalities, including between women and men. She underlined that respect for the human rights of the individual, without cultural boundaries, and the concept of equal citizenship in a State governed by the rule of law continued to provide the most workable framework, as well as new opportunities, for achieving gender equality.

153. The representative noted that in Turkey, contradictions of globalization, modernization and traditionalism had an impact on the status of women in society. Constraints of underdevelopment and structural adjustment and of religious fundamentalism and claims based on ethnic rivalries presented sources of conflict with long-term prospects that may be unfavourable for the status of women.

154. While acknowledging continuing inequalities and disparities in the status of women, the representative highlighted progress and pointed to the development of a gender-sensitive agenda in Turkey. Supported by growing feminist and women's movements, women had become visible and had been expanding their sphere of action. The most arduous and urgent task facing the Government now was to respond to the demands of women, particularly the enhancement of their basic citizenship rights within a secular social order.

155. In Turkey, a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population, the equality of men and women was recognized in the Constitution and in statutes. While some discriminatory clauses in the Turkish Criminal and Civil Codes had been repealed in recent years, an overall reform of the Civil Code remained to be completed.

156. The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women had been established in 1991 and was attached to the Prime Ministry. Despite its limited staff and budget, the Directorate acted as the coordinating body vis-à-vis

government institutions, networked with non-governmental organizations and supported research and training. Gender issues were an integral part of Turkey's five-year development plan. While a number of special measures and initiatives had been introduced to strengthen women's active participation in development, more was needed to reach a larger number of women. Currently the establishment of the Under-Secretariat for Women's Affairs and Family was under way.

157. Among the challenges faced by Turkey in achieving women's equality, the representative identified the disparities in status and opportunities for urban middle-class and rural women; violence against women in the private domain; a strengthening of the contribution of the media to the advancement of women, including through an increase in the number of female professionals in this area; and the revision of educational materials, which continued to portray women in their traditional roles as mothers and wives. Likewise, women's participation in politics and in Parliament remained low, notwithstanding the introduction of quotas by political parties.

158. Disparities in socio-economic areas remained a great concern and included women's low literacy rates, their access to education and opportunities, as well as patterns of employment. Women's low status also affected their access to health services. Particular problems persisted for Turkey's rural women in eastern and southeastern Anatolia, who continued to live in traditional social frameworks and were affected by an ongoing armed conflict and whose access to opportunities and services remained severely limited.

159. At the Fourth World Conference on Women, Turkey committed itself to withdrawing all its reservations under articles 15 and 16 of the Convention by the year 2000, a step which requires the revision of a number of discriminatory laws contained in the Civil Code. Turkey also committed itself to achieving full literacy of women by the year 2000.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

160. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Turkey for its high-level delegation, which was headed by the Minister of State responsible for Women's Affairs and the Family, and the exhaustive replies and information provided by the Government in response to the questions of the pre-session working group.

161. The frankness of the assessment of the status of women, particularly in the oral presentation, and the acknowledgment of persisting inequalities and disparities, indicating the Government's willingness to confront the critical issues facing women in Turkey, was appreciated by the Committee. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the Government of Turkey had expressed its support for the adoption of an optional protocol to the Convention.

162. The Committee also appreciated the well-structured, frank and detailed report, which followed its guidelines. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that, in the course of the dialogue with the Committee, the representatives of the State party had manifested the determined political will of the Government to implement the Convention progressively. At the same time, and in a self-critical manner, the representatives described the difficulties encountered in the implementation of policies and programmes consistent with the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

163. The reservations to articles 15 and 16 of the Convention were regarded by the experts as serious impediments to the full implementation of the Convention in the State party.

164. The difficulties emanating from globalization, modernization and deeply rooted traditionalism interplayed strongly in the context of the status of women in Turkey. Being a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population, Turkey was experiencing pressures from various political groups. The Committee recognized the serious impact that those pressures had on the condition of women and that they served to perpetuate the existing inequality between women and men and hampered the de jure and de facto implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

165. The Committee noted that the consolidated second and third reports were prepared with the contributions of governmental institutions, specialists and academicians working on women's issues, women's groups, political parties, trade unions, representatives of the media and non-governmental organizations.

166. The distribution of the previous report to all institutions and persons concerned with women's human rights and the translation of the Convention into Turkish was welcomed by the Committee.

167. The Committee welcomed the information, reiterated in the excellent oral presentation of the delegation of the State party, relating to the draft law to amend the various articles of the Civil Code pertaining to family law, which would allow for the withdrawal by Turkey of its reservations.

168. The Committee also welcomed the information in the report relating to the Government's intention to revise the Citizenship Law.

169. The Committee further welcomed the decision of the Government of Turkey to conclude bilateral agreements with other countries that would permit Turkish citizens, women and men alike, to keep their citizenship upon marriage to a foreign national.

170. The Committee congratulated the Government for legally guaranteeing the equal right of girls and boys to free education and training. It also welcomed the recommendation of the fifteenth National Council of Education to increase compulsory and uninterrupted primary education to eight years and its decision to develop curricula and revise textbooks and teaching methods to be free of sex-based stereotypes and to eliminate gender-based prejudices from educational programmes.

171. Taking note of the extensive and detailed information and statistical data related to the situation of women in the field of employment, the Committee appreciated the fact that women were entitled to the same employment opportunities as men. It also welcomed the participation of women in the labour force in different economic activities.

172. The Committee took note of the impact of the micro-credit scheme in promoting women entrepreneurs.

173. The Committee also welcomed the commitments made by Turkey at the Fourth World Conference on Women to the effect that by the year 2000 it would:

(a) Reduce infant and maternal mortality rates by 50 per cent;

(b) Raise compulsory education to eight years;

(c) Eradicate female illiteracy;

(d) Withdraw the reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Principal areas of concern

174. The Committee was deeply concerned about the reservations of Turkey to article 15, paragraphs 2 and 4, and article 16, paragraphs 1 (c), (d), (f) and (g). It was also concerned with the prolonged discussions and the resistance to the reform of the Civil Code, although it appreciated that efforts had been made in that context by the General Directorate, women members of Parliament and the Ministry of Justice. The Committee urged the State party to facilitate and hasten that process so that the Law on Citizenship, the Civil Code and the Criminal Code could be brought into conformity with the articles of the Convention.

175. The Committee expressed its concern that the General Directorate had no corresponding bodies at regional and local levels.

176. The Committee was concerned at the lack of an integrated and systematic approach by the national machinery and the relevant ministries to all areas covered by the Convention, in particular with regard to women in rural areas, vulnerable groups such as ethnic minorities, young women and women in prisons.

177. The Committee noted with deep concern various articles of the Penal Code, including those relating to the abduction of single and married women and to adultery, which were in contradiction to article 2, paragraph (f) of the Convention. In particular, it noted that greater penalties were imposed for the rape of a woman who was a virgin.

178. The Committee noted with the gravest concern the practice of forced gynaecological examinations of women in the investigation of allegations of sexual assault, including of women prisoners while in custody. The Committee emphasized that such coercive practices were degrading, discriminatory and unsafe and constituted a violation by state authorities of the bodily integrity, person and dignity of women.

179. The Committee was concerned about the provisions of the Penal Code that allowed less rigorous sanctions or penalties for "honour killings". That concept contravened the principle of respect for human life and the security of all persons, which was protected by all the international human rights laws.

180. The Committee deeply regretted that no special temporary measures had been put in place to redress the situation of Kurdish women, who suffered double discrimination.

181. The Committee was concerned by the pervasive violence, in all its forms, perpetrated against women and girls and the inadequacy of legal and educational measures to combat such violence. The Committee was concerned that neither its general recommendation 19 on violence against women nor the Declaration on the

Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993, had been taken into consideration. The law categorizing violence as "crime against public decency and public order" contradicted the spirit of the Convention and contravened the dignity of the person.

182. The Committee was particularly concerned that juridical or educational measures that may have been undertaken by the State in pursuance of article 5, paragraph (a), in the context of violence within the family, had not been effective.

183. The Committee was concerned that sufficient appropriate measures had not yet been taken to prevent and combat the acceptance of male dominance and violence against women in rural as well as urban areas, as reflected in such practices as beating women and requiring silent obedience from them. Equally, there was a lack of concrete measures to prevent the high number of suicides among women victims of violence.

184. The Committee expressed its concern that spousal consent was required for abortion, a requirement it considered to be in contravention of article 15 of the Convention. The Committee also expressed its disapproval at the existence of brothels regulated by law and the lack of information and statistical data about the phenomenon.

185. The Committee was concerned that the Turkish political parties, trade unions and other public institutions were not sufficiently sensitive to the importance of the implementation of article 7 of the Convention and the need for representation in decision-making bodies, including Parliament and the Government, where the number of women was still very low.

186. The Committee was concerned about the Turkish Citizenship Law, which provided that a Turkish woman who decided to assume the nationality of her foreign husband would lose her Turkish nationality.

187. The Committee likewise expressed its concern at the high level of illiteracy among women and girls, especially in the rural areas, the drop-out rates of girls in schools owing to family practices, early marriages and the prioritization of boys in school enrolment and other gender-discriminatory practices in education. The clustering of women in higher education in areas regarded as suitable for women was also noted by the Committee.

188. The Committee considered with concern the very low minimum age for employment, which contravened relevant ILO conventions. The high level of unemployment of migrant urban female workers, the lack of measures to integrate them into the labour markets and the persistent occupational segregation in lower paid jobs impeded their upward mobility and further reinforced discrimination against women in the labour market.

189. The lack of legal literacy programmes to raise the awareness of rural women regarding their rights was also a matter of concern.

190. The Committee was particularly concerned at the high number of women in rural areas working in family enterprises, since their work was not recognized in the formal economy, they did not receive social security benefits and their access to health services was limited.

Suggestions and recommendations

191. The Committee requested the Government of Turkey to take steps to address the aforementioned principal subjects of concern and to reflect progress made in its next periodic report.

192. The Committee invited the Government to review the Civil Code, particularly with regard to family law, with a view to removing the reservations to the Convention. It also suggested that the related provisions of the Penal Code be revised in order to ensure women the full protection of the law on equal terms with men.

193. The Committee invited the Government of Turkey to educate women and men towards a culture of shared obligations and responsibilities of family work and the rearing of children. In addition, information and training efforts directed at both sexes were needed to stop the perpetuation of traditional attitudinal and behavioural patterns and to create awareness of women's rights as expressed in the Convention.

194. Serious efforts were required to address violence against women, especially domestic violence, through legislation and comprehensive, gender-sensitive awareness-raising and education for the public in general and for law enforcement agencies, such as judges, lawyers and police in particular. Battered women's shelters should be established and provided with adequate financial and human resources.

195. The practice of so-called honour killings, based on customs and traditions, was a violation of the right to life and security of persons and therefore must be appropriately addressed under the law. The Government was also invited to review in a critical manner the practice of virginity examinations in cases of alleged rape; likewise, it was invited to investigate whether coerced virginity examinations had been carried out on women in the investigation of sexual attacks or abuses or in any other circumstances.

196. The Committee requested the review of the requirement of spousal consent for abortion.

197. The media should be mobilized in support of advancing the status and the rights of women, including through non-sexist and non-stereotypical portrayal of women in the media and through programmes to address violence against women. Efforts to increase the number of women in the media, particularly in decision-making positions, should be intensified.

198. The situation of minority women needed to be monitored urgently, and a systematic effort was necessary to ensure for them their full legal rights guaranteed by the Convention.

199. Temporary special measures with numerical goals and timetables should be initiated in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in particular in the political sphere and the public sector.

200. Consideration should be given to the revision of the Citizenship Law in order to give women equal rights with men in all areas of nationality law.

201. Continuing support should be given to female students in order to increase the rate of female university graduates and their participation in non-traditional fields.

202. The Committee urged the Government of Turkey to take adequate measures to provide skills training, retraining and credit facilities or other support services that would provide employment opportunities or self-employment for urban migrant workers, to correct occupational segregation through concrete measures and to provide the necessary protection to working women to ensure their safety and healthy conditions of work.

203. Concrete training programmes aimed at increasing opportunities for women to make use of micro-credit programmes would also be necessary.

204. The Committee invited the Government of Turkey to take measures to recognize rural women's work in family enterprises for the purposes of pension entitlement. In addition, the Government should disseminate information in the Convention relating to rural women's rights.

205. The Committee requested the compilation of current data and statistics on family planning methods, the use of such methods by men and women and access to contraception disaggregated by age and sex.

206. The Committee urged the Government to disseminate widely copies of the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the present concluding comments and to translate those documents into local languages where necessary so as to ensure that all women have access to them. The Committee also requested the Government to address the concerns raised in these comments in its next report. The next report should likewise contain information on steps taken by the Government to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

4. Third periodic reports

Venezuela

207. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Venezuela (CEDAW/C/VEN/3) at its 323rd and 324th meetings, on 22 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.323 and 324).

208. The representative of Venezuela explained that the third periodic report described implementation of the Convention from 1989 to 1995. It had been prepared after the Government was formed in 1994.

209. The representative emphasized that the third periodic report outlined the progress achieved by women in implementing the Convention during the period indicated. However, she stressed that the report did not include the ninth national plan drawn up by the Government. The plan guaranteed equal opportunities for women and men in all areas of public life, as well as the integration of a gender perspective, and sought the full realization of the goal of genuine democracy.

210. The representative stated that the process of preparing the report had provided the Government of Venezuela with the opportunity to assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention. She also acknowledged the role of the Committee in the follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and expressed the hope that the critical views expressed by the Committee would improve the Government's work.

211. The representative made clear that Venezuela, as well as the rest of Latin America, was experiencing social, political, economic and cultural

transformations that were having a tremendous impact on society, particularly on women, who had seen their incomes and traditional sources of support reduced and their responsibilities expanded. However, she pointed out that the economic and political crisis of the 1980s and part of the 1990s had forced women to demand greater participation in society and the State. It was in that context that demands for "participative representation" were being made by new players, especially women.

212. The representative stressed that Venezuela had one of the highest rates of population growth in Latin America. She said that the country was affected by the end of the revenue-based model, which was causing inflation and affecting the living conditions of the population, especially women heads of household. She said that the "Plan Venezuela" had been put in place to alleviate, in the short term, the impact of structural adjustment programmes on the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

213. The representative provided a review of the major achievements with respect to equality between women and men. She described various legislative amendments, in particular the Sexual and Domestic Violence Bill, the amendments to the Civil Code concerning equality of rights and responsibilities between spouses in marriage, the principle of solidarity and sharing of responsibilities within the family, and the right for teenage mothers to remain in school. In addition, she indicated that the National Women's Council was the machinery that monitored the implementation of the legal reforms and the strategies agreed to in the Beijing Platform for Action.

214. The representative made clear that, in spite of the progress indicated, insufficient emphasis was being given to women's access to training and literacy and to programmes for the empowerment of women, and that persistent stereotypes, often found in educational texts and cultural attitudes, remained obstacles to the advancement of women. She also informed the Committee that economic inequalities persisted against women, particularly in the labour force, where their position and remuneration had placed them at a lower level than men. In addition, women were still marginalized in terms of resources, and their political participation was quite limited owing to the resistance to quotas of political parties.

215. The representative emphasized actions to be taken in the short term, including amendments to the Equal Opportunities for Women Act, which were expected to lead to the establishment of an independent women's institute.

216. The representative regretted that the Committee's procedures for periodic reports, which allowed only a short time for Governments to respond to written questions, did not enable them to provide deep analysis and appropriate replies. She concluded by emphasizing that a State party should not be subjected to undue pressures as a result of Committee procedures.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

217. Venezuela presented a report covering the period from 1989 to 1995. The Committee expressed appreciation to the representative of Venezuela for the frankness with which she described the social, economic and political situation of women in her country and the way in which her Government had tried to implement the Convention.

218. The Committee noted that the report had not been prepared according to the Committee's guidelines and had not provided statistics on problems related to each article of the Convention. Nor did it contain a detailed, factual description of the policies and programmes being carried out and their success in meeting the de facto needs of Venezuelan women with a view to complying with the Convention.

219. Nevertheless, the report contained a large amount of data on the de jure situation of women in Venezuela; that information had been taken up again and, in some cases, expanded upon in the oral presentation. The Committee thanked the representative for answering most of the 74 questions put to the Government and noted with understanding the representative's statement that lack of time had made it difficult to provide the Committee with more detailed answers or with updated statistics.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

220. The most serious obstacle to implementing the Convention in Venezuela was clearly the poverty facing a large percentage of the population (77 per cent of the urban population and 75 per cent of the rural population were living in poverty). That problem had been exacerbated by the fact that 83.99 per cent of the population had moved to urban areas, leaving only 16.01 per cent in the countryside. Among the population aged 25 to 44 years, the percentage of women migrants was greater than that of men.

221. Another serious problem was what was referred to as the "exhaustion of the revenue-based development model of the Venezuelan economy", which had forced the Government to take economic measures to control inflation and balance the budget, at the cost of social investment. The severe restrictions placed on social spending had primarily affected the most vulnerable population groups, including women, leading to the so-called feminization of poverty.

222. The country had been unable to revitalize and balance its economy, although it had implemented a plan to combat poverty in an attempt to mitigate the social costs of adjustment. The plan had not been very successful, as the report indicated.

223. The economic situation was exacerbated by the persistence of entrenched patriarchal patterns and of stereotypes and prejudices against women in people's social attitudes. Such patterns and attitudes were reinforced by a set of laws that had thus far resisted amendment (for instance, a proposal for amending the Penal Code had been under consideration since 1985), despite considerable efforts on the part of various governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations.

224. Another obstacle to the implementation of the Convention was the lack of continuity in State policies and programmes for women, which meant that concepts, methods and mechanisms for solving problems and implementing the Convention coherently and systematically kept changing.

225. A further problem was that it was difficult to secure passage, by the legislative branch, of proposals for combating discrimination against women.

226. The national machinery for implementing the Convention, the National Women's Council, did not seem to have the resources, decision-making powers and necessary influence to introduce a gender perspective in the various government bodies.

Positive aspects

227. The Committee welcomed the Penal Code Reform Bill and the Sexual and Domestic Violence Bill.

228. The Committee viewed as very positive the Equal Opportunities for Women Act, under which an independent women's institute and a national office for the defence of women's rights were to be established.

229. The incorporation of a gender perspective in the Eighth National Plan and the preparation of a national programme for women with that perspective were important achievements.

230. The promulgation of legislation guaranteeing that pregnant teenagers could complete their education and could not be withdrawn from school because of their pregnancy was a great success.

231. The cooperation initiated by the National Women's Council with non-governmental organizations and the creation of seven national women's networks were extremely positive steps.

Principal areas of concern

232. In addition to the poverty in which Venezuela's population was living, the Committee was extremely concerned at the absence of any policies and programmes at the grass-roots level for promoting women's interests and at the fact that it was difficult to secure passage of legislative proposals for meeting women's needs.

233. The Committee was also concerned that the country had not made much real progress in implementing the Convention and that, despite its efforts, it had yet to respond effectively to problems such as domestic violence, prostitution, early pregnancy, female illiteracy, discrimination in the workplace in terms of how much women were paid, the high percentage of women receiving less than the minimum wage and the elimination of stereotypes.

234. The Committee was concerned that Venezuela had not made the necessary changes to its legal system and that that continued to reinforce patriarchal patterns of behaviour.

235. The Government had also failed to set up a national programme for implementing the strategies set forth in the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, even strategies in such urgent priority areas as poverty eradication.

236. Another area of concern was the reduction in health budgets, the rise in the maternal mortality rate, the lack of and limited access to family-planning programmes (especially for teenagers), the lack of statistics on acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and women's limited access to public health services. In addition, legislation that criminalized abortion, even in cases of incest or rape, remained in force.

237. The Committee was concerned that employment opportunities for women had been lost as a result of cutbacks in the State employment sector, especially since that was forcing women into the informal economy and into low-paid service jobs.

238. The Committee was also deeply concerned at the fact that the State had not prioritized the allocation of funds to social programmes.

239. The Committee was concerned that a Venezuelan man had the right to confer his nationality on his wife upon marriage, but a Venezuelan woman did not have the right to confer her citizenship on her husband. That constituted a violation of article 9 of the Convention.

Suggestions and recommendations

240. The Committee especially recommended the implementation of effective programmes for combating poverty, which affected women in particular.

241. The Committee said that it would welcome early adoption of the amendments to the Penal Code and of the Sexual and Domestic Violence Bill and the repeal of the article of the Civil Code concerning citizenship rights that conflicted with the Convention.

242. The Committee recommended that Venezuela fulfil the commitments it had made in adopting the Beijing Platform for Action.

243. The Committee suggested that policies and programmes should be undertaken to halt the rise in the maternal mortality rate and that family-planning programmes for teenagers should be developed, in both urban and rural areas.

244. The Committee suggested that the Government should work for early approval of the establishment of the national machinery with sufficient integration into the political system and sufficient human and financial resources.

245. The Committee recommended that the Government undertake broad-based programmes directed at the entire population, through the mass media and other possible channels, to combat gender stereotypes.

246. The Committee also recommended that the Government undertake measures to close the wage gap between women and men under the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

247. The Committee requested the Government of Venezuela to address the concerns raised in the present comments in its next report, including following the Committee's reporting guidelines. Information on the implementation of the Committee's general recommendations and steps to be taken in regard to the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action should also be included. It requested the Government to provide statistical data disaggregated by sex with regard to all areas of the Convention in its next report. Finally, the Committee requested the Government to disseminate these concluding comments widely throughout Venezuela.

Denmark

248. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Denmark (CEDAW/C/DEN/3) at its 328th and 329th meetings, on 24 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.328 and 329).

249. In her introductory statement, the representative noted that the report had been prepared in a participatory way and included the comments of various women's organizations in Denmark. To further strengthen the outreach of the

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, both the Convention and the report had been translated into Danish and published by women's organizations.

250. The representative pointed out that much had been accomplished in terms of improving the status of women in Denmark, but the success went beyond the provision of legal rights. More importantly, Danish society had also started to change its attitude towards women. An understanding of the concept of gender, including the roles of both men and women, had gained ground. Denmark had focused its efforts on changing attitudes towards women and gender roles in Danish society. In the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action, Denmark had focused on mainstreaming gender issues in all levels of society.

251. The representative informed the Committee about recent efforts to strengthen the institutional framework for the advancement of women that had not been reflected in the report. An ad hoc committee had been established to develop new ideas and strategies to improve national machinery and to consult equality institutions in other countries. Furthermore, the Government of Denmark had increased its support to the Equal Status Council in terms of personnel and funding.

252. The representative highlighted some recent changes in legislation designed to advance the status of women further. For example, Danish counties were now obliged to report to the national Government on issues related to equality in employment in their region, and a proposal would be discussed in Parliament concerning women's right to join the army under conditions almost equal to those applicable to men.

253. The representative described the special efforts undertaken by Denmark to encourage fathers to share parental responsibility for the raising of children. The legal framework provided unmarried couples with the possibility of sharing custody and granted both parents the right to parental leave. The representative also pointed out that those measures had to be accompanied by programmes designed to motivate men actually to use the parental leave schemes. Therefore, the Minister of Employment was exploring new models to encourage fathers to make use of their newly acquired rights.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

254. The Committee expressed appreciation for the clear and well-organized third periodic report of Denmark, which closely followed the Committee's guidelines.

255. The Committee was pleased to note that the report and Denmark's answers to the questions of the Committee's pre-session working group provided relevant and up-to-date statistics. That allowed the Committee to discern the evolution of conditions in relation to the majority of the articles of the Convention.

256. The Committee also commended the Government of Denmark for including comments of non-governmental organizations in its report and in particular the fact that those comments responded to the report of the State party. The Committee evaluated that practice as a positive innovation.

Positive aspects

257. Denmark's commitment to high standards of gender equality and its consistent efforts to create an egalitarian society with respect to gender were regarded by the Committee as exemplary.

258. The Committee was aware of the legal measures taken by Denmark and the fact that the statistics on different aspects of gender equality in Denmark reflected constant improvement over time. The Committee was pleased to observe the institutionalized participation of women's non-governmental organizations in the politics of equality and the mainstreaming of gender equality through the creation of Equality Commissions in a majority of ministries in Denmark.

259. The Committee appreciated the Government's holistic approach to the implementation of the Convention and was pleased to note that conscientious efforts were already under way for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

260. The Committee was also pleased to learn that provisions concerning persecution on the basis of gender had been incorporated into the laws on the status of refugees in Denmark.

Principal areas of concern

261. The Committee noted with concern the challenges currently facing efforts to implement temporary special measures to hasten gender equality, such as the removal of quotas by political parties. Although the participation of women in politics was at a higher level than in other countries, Denmark had yet to reach gender parity in the political sphere.

262. The disproportionately low levels of women's participation in academe, in research positions and in management positions in the public and private sectors suggested that insufficient systematic and goal-oriented advocacy and action was taking place in the light of Denmark's leading role in those areas.

263. The inadequacy of culturally and gender-sensitive measures and programmes for immigrant and refugee women to enable them to benefit from legal and social services available in Denmark was noted as an area of concern by the Committee.

264. The absence of a specific law on violence against women was noted as a principal deficiency. The Committee expressed a desire to have fuller information about the actual incidence of violence, rape and incest and was concerned about the absence of specific legislation and/or measures to sensitize the police, the judiciary or the public in general regarding those issues.

265. The Committee noted with concern that stereotypical perceptions of gender role continued to exist in society and were related to the perseverance of attitudes and behaviour that kept women away from decision-making positions and kept men from assuming an equal share of family responsibilities.

266. The fact that women, despite their high level of education, were more seriously affected by unemployment than men was noted with concern by the Committee. The Committee was also concerned that women were still paid less than men, despite efforts to initiate assessments of equal pay for work of equal value.

Suggestions and recommendations

267. Temporary special measures should be maintained and strengthened, particularly in the areas of reducing unemployment among women; ensuring that women and men receive equal pay for work of equal value; increasing women's participation in private-sector decision-making; increasing the number of female university professors and researchers; and encouraging men to devote more time to child care and housework. Such initiatives should include quantitative targets, time limits for their achievement, specific measures and sufficient budgetary resources.

268. More research should be conducted on the incidence of violence against women, particularly in vulnerable groups such as immigrants, as well as on the advantages of enacting legislation specifically directed at reducing such violence. The research finding should be included in the next report submitted in accordance with article 18 of the Convention.

269. In particular, more efforts should be made to determine whether trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution are taking place and whether new communications technologies, especially the Internet, are being used for such purposes.

270. The gender and culture course, which is currently optional in pre-university curricula, should be made mandatory in secondary education.

271. In accordance with the Beijing Platform for Action, it is recommended that the value of non-remunerated work done by both women and men should be included in national accounts, through satellite accounts.

272. The Committee recommended that Denmark continue to include among the objectives of its development assistance programmes the promotion of the rights of women and the elimination of discrimination against women and, in particular, the implementation of the Convention in beneficiary countries.

273. In addition to information relating to the recommendations above, the Committee requested that the next report include information on:

(a) Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and of the commitments announced by Denmark at the Fourth World Conference on Women;

(b) The number of women and men who work: (i) part-time; (ii) on a flexible schedule; and (iii) outside the workplace, using new technologies;

(c) The steps taken by trade unions and business organizations to implement the principle of equal pay for work of equal value;

(d) The use, in cases of abortion, of the RU-486 pill;

(e) The number of women who use medically assisted reproduction techniques and the number of children adopted;

(f) Disabled women, especially in terms of their access to education and employment;

(g) Concrete results and the de facto impact of policies on and programmes for women;

(h) The economic situation of women, including successful measures to combat the unemployment of women.

274. The Committee requested the Government of Denmark to address the concerns included in the present concluding comments in its next report. It also requested wide dissemination of these comments throughout the country to make the people of Denmark aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard.

5. Combined third and fourth periodic reports

Philippines

275. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of the Philippines (CEDAW/C/1997/PHI/3 and 4)* at its 327th and 328th meetings, on 27 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.327 and 328). The representatives, including the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, presented a three-part document containing extensive responses to the questions of the Committee's pre-session working group. The document had been prepared collaboratively by ministerial agencies and non-governmental organizations.

276. The Committee was informed of the various measures the Government had taken in the implementation of the Convention. A 30-year perspective plan had been devised containing information on the status of women in every sector and stipulating measures to be taken to achieve full equality between women and men. It was the policy of the Government to pursue a gender-responsive approach to poverty alleviation. Moreover, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women had been given direct access to the highest policy-making level. The Government's commitment was also reflected in the secured funding within the national budget for the purpose of improving women's lives. The Committee was further informed that considerable improvements had been made in the fields of women's health and education.

277. At the same time, the representative of the Philippines acknowledged that, although much progress had been achieved since the consideration of the State party's second report, there was still more to be done before the Convention was fully implemented in the country. She also noted the lack of an effective mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Convention. She described the major challenge posed by the Government's decentralization policy to the achievement of the effective implementation of the Convention.

278. The representative noted that, in spite of the rapid economic recovery, women in the Philippines suffered disproportionately from poverty, thus contributing to the continued feminization of overseas employment. Rural women were particularly affected, and this had led to the migration of a large number of rural women to urban areas as well as overseas. She reported that that was a major concern of the Government of the Philippines, which had set up, inter alia, monitoring centres, counselling services and specific support programmes, as well as providing welfare assistance. The Committee was informed that most women migrant workers were employed as entertainers and domestic helpers. Those jobs often put them in a very vulnerable position and exposed

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* At its 313th meeting, the Committee was informed that its Bureau had waived the general rule requiring simultaneous release of official documents in all working languages of the Committee and agreed to take up document CEDAW/C/1997/PHI/4 on the basis of the edited English version.

them to risks of violent abuse. In that respect, the representative recognized that further efforts were required to establish more effective systems to allow the particular needs and problems of women migrant workers to be addressed.

279. The representative alerted the Committee to the increasing incidence of crimes of violence against women. Various measures had been taken by the Government to combat such violence, reflecting the Committee's general recommendation 19 on violence against women. The Committee was informed that various support systems had been set up, including women's shelter homes and a 24-hour helpline. Several bills had been proposed, for example on rape and domestic violence, as a result of the lobbying of non-governmental organizations and government agencies. However, it remained to be seen whether they could be effectively implemented. The Government was aware that the prevailing gender-stereotyped images had to be eliminated and that a public awareness-raising campaign needed to be organized in that regard.

280. The Committee was further informed that prostitution was illegal in the Philippines. However, the representative noted that there had been changes in public opinion on that subject, and much debate had been taking place in the country in relation to the issue.

281. The representative of the Philippines concluded her presentation by assuring the Committee of her Government's commitment to advancing the status of women.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

282. The Committee welcomed the presentation by the Government of the Philippines, and commended it in particular on the high quality of its fourth periodic report, which contained detailed information on the implementation of the Convention in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. The report gave a comprehensive overview of legal and administrative measures taken by the Government of the Philippines, and the analysis indicated a good understanding of the obstacles to the advancement of women. At the same time, it lacked factual information, including statistics, on the actual effect of government programmes and policies. The Committee applauded the initiative of the Government to collaborate with non-governmental organizations in preparing the report. It was particularly pleased with the frank and sincere approach of the national machinery in identifying the major obstacles to the elimination of discrimination against women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

283. The Committee noted the major economic policies undertaken by the Government, including economic and trade agreements at the regional and global levels, which will have a profound impact on women. In particular, the direction towards economic liberalization and privatization may have serious implications for the economic position of women and, in particular, on the economic position of women in the free-trade zones and in rural areas. The Committee was concerned that the trend towards feminization of migration and its attendant problems, including violence against women migrant workers, might be exacerbated.

Positive aspects

284. The Committee welcomed the adoption by the Government of the Philippine Plan for Gender-responsive Development~~,~~ 1995-2025, and also the priority policy imperatives set by the national machinery for women to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and to mainstream gender and development throughout the Government.

285. The Committee commended the decision to allocate a given percentage of all governmental budgets to women's programmes and projects, and encouraged an increase in the minimum percentage allocated.

286. The Committee noted with satisfaction several measures taken between the third and fourth periodic reports, such as the provision of credit assistance to women, legislation prohibiting sexual harassment, raising the minimum wage for domestic workers and increasing maternity and paternity benefits for employed persons.

287. The Committee applauded the report on an initial consultation to measure women's unremunerated work within a satellite account to the national economic system.

288. The Committee also commended the increase in the number of women's non-governmental organizations working at the grass-roots level and their significant contribution to the advancement of women, which was reflected in the reports of the State party.

289. The Committee was gratified at the exceptionally high level of literacy (93 per cent) among Filipino women.

Principal areas of concern

290. The Committee noted with concern the inadequacy of monitoring mechanisms and indicators to measure the impact of government policies and programmes, as well as laws and administrative directives and regulations, especially at the local level.

291. The Committee expressed its grave concern about the economic reforms, which had resulted in growth in the gross national product, on the one hand, but in an increasing gap in the rates of employment of women and men and the economic marginalization of women on the other. Such damage, even if short-term, would be increasingly hard to rectify. It appeared that, owing to the lack of a livelihood, rural women were migrating to urban areas, where unemployment was higher than ever, which could account for the large number of women working as prostitutes and for the high proportion of women migrating as overseas contract workers.

292. The Committee commented on the discriminatory application of laws enforced against women prostitutes and not the men involved as traffickers, pimps and clients, and noted further that forced medical examinations of the women without similar attention to the male clients was not effective as a public health measure.

293. The Committee expressed its deep concern about deficiencies in the legal system with regard to violence against women, in view of the fact that incest and domestic violence were not specifically penalized by law and were still shrouded in silence.

294. The Committee noted that the decentralization of population and development programmes should bring services closer to the people. The Committee was concerned that without the requisite resource capacities and gender sensitivity of officials, such decentralization could deny women access to those services in contravention of the Convention.

295. The Committee noted with concern that despite the increased participation of women in decision-making in the public sphere, especially in non-governmental organizations, there was still very low representation of women in politics, top levels of Government and the judiciary.

Suggestions and recommendations

296. The Committee urged the Government of the Philippines to adopt a top-priority policy of creating safe and protected jobs for women as a viable economic alternative to the current unemployment of women and their participation as subcontractors and, in the informal sector, as workers in free-trade zones, as prostitutes or as overseas contract workers.

297. The Committee suggested that the Government ensure that its economic policy did not lead to marginalization and exploitation so that women were encouraged to seek overseas employment to the detriment of society.

298. The Committee strongly recommended that the Government strengthen agencies that provide information and support services to women before they depart for overseas work, as well as in the receiving countries in cases of need.

299. The Committee suggested that measures for dealing with prostitution should focus on penalizing traffickers and creating alternative job opportunities for the women.

300. The Committee strongly urged the Government to enact legislation to combat violence against women and to compile the relevant data.

301. The Committee recommended that reproductive and sexual health services, including family planning and contraception, be made available and accessible to all women in all regions.

302. The Committee recommended that temporary special measures be adopted to increase the participation of women in top-level decision-making positions in the public sector.

303. The Committee suggested that there was a strong need for developing gender-disaggregated data in all areas.

304. In order to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, the Committee recommended that monitoring mechanisms and indicators be developed to measure the effect of government policies and programmes.

305. The Committee requested the Government of the Philippines to address the concerns included in the present concluding comments in its next report and to include information on the implementation of the Committee's general recommendations, as well as information relating to the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action in accordance with its revised reporting guidelines. It also requested wide dissemination of the comments throughout the Philippines.

Canada

306. The Committee considered the third and fourth periodic reports of Canada (CEDAW/C/CAN/3 and 4) at its 329th and 330th meetings, on 28 January 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.329 and 330).

307. In introducing the reports, the representative placed the implementation of the Convention and the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women within the framework of the Canadian federal system. She noted that in Canada, the federal and provincial/territorial governments shared legislative authority. Responsibility for areas such as education, health and social services was largely devolved to the provincial/territorial level. Canada's national machinery for the advancement of women was well-established at the federal level, and women's bureaux or agencies existed at the level of all provincial/territorial governments.

308. Canada's approach to promoting gender equality was based on the recognition that gender factors influenced political, economic and social systems. As a consequence, all social policy must take into account the differential impact of policies on men and women. The national machinery provided gender analysis and policy advice to government entities to ensure that gender factors were incorporated into legislation, policies and programmes.

309. The representative stressed that her Government attached great importance to close cooperation with non-governmental organizations and civil society as a crucial aspect of the advancement of women. Various efforts were undertaken to reflect the views of civil society in policy-making processes. Extensive networks existed with non-governmental organizations, and the Government provided funding to many women's organizations.

310. Noting that Canada faced new domestic and global socio-economic challenges, the representative emphasized that Canada had taken decisive steps to provide women with an effective legal framework against discrimination. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guaranteed equality before the law and under the law and the equal protection of the law to women and men. Individuals and groups could challenge legislation and practices of the federal or provincial/territorial governments if they perceived them to be discriminatory. The Charter provided protection against intentional discrimination as well as systemic discrimination and protected women against laws and practices that resulted inadvertently in unfair treatment of women. A special programme provided financial support for groups and individuals seeking the equality protection of the Charter. A recent amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act granted protection against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

311. The representative highlighted a number of recent efforts by her Government to advance women's equality in the economic and social fields. As women's employment and economic autonomy were considered to be key building blocks for women's equality, improvements were needed with regard to women's earnings and to deal with persistent occupational segregation. A number of recent legislative measures were intended to address those areas. Efforts were also ongoing to measure and value women's and men's unpaid work in the household and to take it into account in policy.

312. The elimination of violence against women and children was another issue of high priority. Canada approached the problem in a comprehensive and holistic way, with particular attention to the underlying causes of such violence. In

addition to recent amendments to strengthen the Criminal Code's response to violence, a number of legislative initiatives were pending.

313. The representative pointed out that special assistance was provided to women who were multiply disadvantaged, a third area of recent initiatives by the Government. Canada recognized that women were disadvantaged not only because of gender but also because of ethnicity, disability or income. The situation of aboriginal women required special attention, and recommendations contained in a recently completed study by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People were expected to play an important role in future policy-making in that field.

314. A fourth area was to ensure women's equal access to health care. Given rising health care costs in Canada, major changes in the Canadian health care system were expected to be implemented over the next decade. The preservation of women's equal access to quality health care would be an essential concern in that process.

315. In conclusion, the representative recognized that despite the progress made in many areas, a lot remained to be done. She assured the Committee of her Government's willingness to develop innovative solutions to the remaining problems, working closely with all parts of Canadian society.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

316. The Committee commended the Canadian Government for its third and fourth periodic reports and for the excellent and comprehensive replies to the numerous written questions prepared by the experts.

317. The Committee also appreciated the high-level delegation, which included representatives from the provinces.

318. The Committee found the format of the written reports, broken down by provinces, difficult to analyse and evaluate. As a result, experts were unable to appreciate fully the gains and obstacles in implementing the Convention.

319. The Committee noted the leading role of Canada in promoting gender equality at the international level through its development cooperation programmes on gender mainstreaming and violence against women.

320. The Committee also noted that while in the report there was a comprehensive review of new legislation and jurisprudence on human rights affecting women, the information provided did not adequately explain the impact on either women in general or on specific groups of women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

321. The restructuring of the economy, a phenomenon occurring in Canada and other highly industrialized countries, appeared to have had a disproportionate impact on women. Although the Government had introduced many measures designed to improve the status of women, the restructuring was seriously threatening to erode the significant gains and advances made by Canadian women. Given the Government's proud record of leadership on women's issues globally, those developments would not only have an impact on Canadian women, but would also be felt by women in other countries.

Positive aspects

322. The Committee commended the high degree of importance attached to the promotion and implementation of human rights in Canada emphasized by its Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as its ratification of international human rights instruments, including the Convention.

323. The Committee noted that Canada had, by its landmark decision-making gender-based violence a basis for granting asylum to women, once again led the way.

324. The Committee noted with appreciation the introduction of the Federal Plan for Gender Equality, which was Canada's framework and blueprint for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

325. The Committee welcomed Canada's emphasis on the participation of civil society in promoting gender equality and in providing mechanisms for cooperation and dialogue, in particular with non-governmental organizations. The annual consultation on violence against women conducted by the Minister of Justice in cooperation with the Council on the Status of Women was particularly commendable.

326. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that Canada continued to strengthen and refine its gender mainstreaming efforts at all levels.

Principal areas of concern

327. While many measures, including laws, were in place to address violence against women, the incidence of such violence was not diminishing, but had in fact increased in some areas.

328. The Committee was concerned about the rising teenage pregnancy rate, with its negative impact on health and education and the resulting increase in the poverty and dependency of young women.

329. The Committee expressed its concern about the trend towards the privatization of health care programmes, which could seriously affect the accessibility and quality of services available to Canadian women, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

330. The Committee was concerned that within the framework of economic and structural changes, including those arising from regional and international economic arrangements, insufficient attention had been paid to their impact on women in general and on disadvantaged women in particular.

331. The Committee was concerned about the deepening poverty among women, particularly among single mothers, aggravated by the withdrawal, modification or weakening of social assistance programmes.

332. The Committee was concerned that despite the steps taken to implement the Federal Employment Equity Act in the public sector, it was still too limited to have a real impact on women's economic position and suffered from weak enforcement.

333. The Committee was concerned that programmes directed at aboriginal women might have discriminatory effects.

334. The Committee also expressed its concern that current budget cutbacks were affecting the continuity of services in women's crisis centres.

Suggestions and recommendations

335. The level of violence against Canadian women in general and sexually exploited women and girls, prostitutes and women victims of trafficking in particular requires urgent action. Measures to combat violence against women need to be continuously monitored and evaluated for their impact on long-term behaviours and attitudes.

336. The Committee suggested that the Government address urgently the factors responsible for increasing poverty among women and especially women single parents and that it develop programmes and policies to combat such poverty.

337. Information on the valuation and qualification of women's unpaid work, including domestic work, should be provided in future reports.

338. The Committee suggested that in the next report the Government, within the possibilities of its legal framework, integrate the information from federal and provincial levels article by article. The Committee also recommended that the report include explicit information on the impact of legislation, policies and programmes on Canadian women in general and specific groups of women in particular.

339. Methodologies to assess progress made in closing the gap in pay between men and women and in ensuring equal pay for work of equal value should be developed.

340. The Federal Plan for Gender Equality should have a specific time-frame, benchmark and measurable goals to monitor implementation and the specific resource allocation required.

341. A comprehensive picture of the situation of aboriginal women should be provided, including their educational situation, their position in the labour force and a description and evaluation of past and present federal and provincial programmes for aboriginal women. Programmes directed at aboriginal women should be monitored for possible discriminatory effects. The plight of aboriginal women in prison is of urgent concern.

342. The Committee recommended that social assistance programmes directed at women be restored to an adequate level.

343. The Committee urged the wide dissemination of the present concluding comments in Canada to make Canadians aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in that regard.

6. Report submitted on an exceptional basis

Zaire

344. At its 317th meeting, on 16 January 1997, the Committee, on the recommendation of its Bureau, considered an oral report presented on an exceptional basis by the representative of Zaire (see CEDAW/C/SR.317).

345. The Committee had originally scheduled to take the initial report of Zaire at its sixteenth session. However, as a result of a breakdown in communication between New York and Kinshasa, the Government did not inform the Secretariat that it was ready to present its report. As a result, the initial report of Zaire was not included in the Committee's agenda.

346. However, as the representative of Zaire arrived in New York expecting to present the State party's initial report, the Committee instead agreed that the representative of Zaire would make an oral report on an exceptional basis on the situation of women in Zaire. The Committee agreed on the understanding that the regular report of Zaire would be rescheduled for consideration by the Committee at a future date.

347. The representative stated that eastern Zaire was in a state of rebellion, and as many as 600,000 Zairians, predominantly women and children, were displaced within the country. At the same time, Zaire was host to a significant number of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. Many persons, including women and children, both Zairians and refugees, had fallen victim to violence, including murder, rape and other abuses.

Comments of the Committee

348. The Committee reiterated that the oral report had been heard on an exceptional basis and as a matter of courtesy for the delegation of Zaire and that the regular report would be rescheduled. It expressed its particular concern for the situation of Zairian women in those areas where conflict had occurred and where refugee populations were high.

349. The Committee regretted that the oral report by the State party had not sufficiently reflected the close link that existed between discrimination against women, gender-based violence and violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of women, particularly in the light of the current situation in the country.

350. The Committee was of the view that effective and immediate measures needed to be taken to protect the physical and moral integrity of refugee and displaced women and of all women victims of armed conflict.

351. The Committee encouraged the State party, when presenting its initial and subsequent reports, to provide information on the consequences of armed conflict within Zaire for the lives of Zairian women, as well as for the lives of refugee women from countries neighbouring Zaire.

V. WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

352. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 8) at its 311th and 332nd meetings, on 13 and 31 January 1997.

353. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who introduced the reports of the Secretariat on reservations to the Convention (CEDAW/C/1997/4) and on ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (CEDAW/C/1997/5) and a working paper containing draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group I

354. At its 332nd meeting, on 31 January 1997, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.2 and Add.1).

1. Concluding comments

355. The Committee decided to maintain its practice of designating a main country rapporteur and back-up rapporteur for each State party report. It decided that the expert nominated as the main country rapporteur would draft the concluding comments and work in close collaboration with the back-up rapporteur, the general rapporteur of the Committee and the Secretariat. The country rapporteur should seek additional information on both initial and subsequent reports about the country under review. She was to present her findings as an introduction to the report at a closed meeting, before the State party's presentation, but the concluding comments drafted thereafter would reflect the views expressed at the meetings during which the report was presented rather than the views of the individual rapporteur.

356. The Committee decided that concluding comments should follow the standard pattern elaborated by it at its fifteenth session. It recommended that a standard format with five headings should be followed, but some flexibility would be necessary to meet unusual situations. The introduction to the comments should include whether the report had followed the Committee's guidelines, whether it was sufficient or insufficient, whether it had incorporated statistical data disaggregated by sex and the nature and quality of the oral report. It was suggested that there should be an objective indication of the strengths of the report and the level of the delegation, which should be considered in an open fashion, as it was impossible for some countries to send large or high-level delegations.

357. The section on factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention would describe major areas of the Convention that had not been implemented by States parties. It would address whether the Convention was self-executing and whether legislation had been put in place to give effect to it, as well as overarching social factors, such as tradition and cultural and behavioural patterns. That section should also include general factors such as the impact of structural adjustment and transition on the women of the State party under review. Any reservations to the Convention should be addressed in that section.

358. The section on positive aspects should be organized in the order of the articles of the Convention. The section on principal areas of concern should be organized in the order of the importance of the particular issue to the country under review. The suggestions and recommendations should provide concrete solutions from the Committee to the problems identified in the rest of the comment.

359. The concluding comments would also include a reference to any commitments of the State party made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, and would close with a recommendation relating to the dissemination of the Convention, the reports and the concluding comments. Each set of concluding comments would be internally balanced, and the Committee would strive to achieve consistency and balance, particularly in terms of praise and expressions of concern, among the concluding comments elaborated at each session.

360. The Committee would hold a closed meeting after the close of constructive dialogue with each State party in order to reflect on the main issues and tendencies to be discussed in the concluding comments relating to the report of the State party.

361. The Committee requested that these guidelines for concluding comments should be provided by the Secretariat to the Committee at each of its sessions. For the decision of the Committee, see chap. I, sect. A, above, decision 16/I.

2. Relations with non-governmental organizations

362. The Committee was broadly supportive of the involvement of non-governmental organizations in its work, its general view being that non-governmental organization material did not compromise the independence of the members, who had been selected on the basis of expertise and integrity. The Committee welcomed the input of non-governmental organizations and proposed that their advocacy role be encouraged. It recommended that, as from the seventeenth session, the Secretariat should facilitate an informal meeting with non-governmental organizations, which would include, inter alia, country-specific information, if possible with interpretation, during the first and second days of its session. The Working Group noted that reports of non-governmental organizations were able to shed light on the de facto implementation of the Convention in States parties and that those reports should be made public and shared with, and made widely known in, the State party concerned. It was stressed that the input of non-governmental organizations should not be perceived as clandestine material given to Committee members. For the decision of the Committee, see chap. I, sect. A, above, decision 16/II.

3. Relations with other treaty bodies

363. The practice of nominating Committee members to serve as focal points to other treaty bodies should continue. The Secretariat should ensure that the concluding comments of the Committee are transmitted immediately to other treaty bodies and that the concluding comments and observations of the other bodies are made available to the Committee as soon as possible.

364. The Committee welcomed the initiation of meetings between the Committee and the Committee on the Rights of the Child and called for further collaboration with other treaty bodies. In particular, the Committee should take into account the general comments and recommendations of other treaty bodies. The Working

Group recommended that those members with fellow nationals in other treaty bodies should collaborate with them as much as possible.

4. Specialized agencies and other entities

365. Links between the Committee and specialized agencies and other entities of the United Nations should be strengthened. The Secretariat should ensure that the concluding comments of the Committee are submitted to the heads of specialized agencies as soon as possible after their conclusion. Specialized agencies, particularly those with field-level offices, should keep in mind the principles and recommendations of the Committee in defining their work programmes. The input of specialized agencies and other entities into the Committee's work within article 22 of the Convention should be more structured. Such input should be country-specific and include information on treaties accepted by the reporting State party, information from country or regional studies about the State party, new statistics about the State party collected by the agencies and a description of the country-level programmes of the agencies in the State party under review. The Committee would review its practice of nominating focal points for specialized agencies and other entities at its next session.

5. Institutional relations

366. An ongoing formal exchange should be established between the Committee and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences. The Special Rapporteur should be invited to report to the Committee on general developments within her mandate, as well as on the results of specific studies undertaken by her which related to States parties under review by the Committee.

367. The Committee also recommended that relations be maintained with the Special Rapporteur on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, as well as other relevant country-specific and thematic mechanisms.

6. Analysis report

368. The analysis report prepared by the Secretariat should provide the text of any reservations entered by the State party, information about whether those reservations had been withdrawn or modified and the text of reservations to other treaties. The report should also include the reactions of other States parties to reservations to the Convention and current statistics culled from United Nations sources. The Secretariat would also provide an analysis of whether any recommendations in the concluding comments of the Committee relating to the earlier report of the State party were addressed in the subsequent report.

7. Pre-session working group

369. On the basis of written observations of members of the Committee as well as observations of members of the pre-session working group, the pre-session working group would formulate a short list of questions concentrating on major areas of concern in regard to implementation of the Convention by the State party. The pre-session should be convened at the session prior to the one at which selected States parties were to report; written questions would be

submitted to the State party, which would be answered in writing by the State party in advance of the session (see chap. I, sect. B, above, suggestion 16/2). The Committee would enter into a constructive dialogue on the basis of those replies.

8. The Committee's practices during constructive dialogue

370. Guidelines should be formulated to guide States parties with regard to their presentation of subsequent reports. Those guidelines should be part of the Committee's existing guidelines for the preparation of reports. The guidelines should indicate that the State party presenting its report would address the Committee for up to one hour with one and a half meetings being available for consideration by the Committee of the report.

371. Committee members should identify those areas in which they wished to specialize at the next session. A group of up to three members would communicate with each other about their area of specialization and prepare thematic questions. Specialization would not preclude members from posing questions in areas outside their speciality.

9. Rules of procedure

372. A first reading of the revised draft rules of procedure prepared by Ms. Bernard was begun, and general comments that would be submitted to Ms. Bernard and reflected in her revised draft for the seventeenth session were made. It resolved that any further comments would be sent through the Secretariat to Ms. Tallawy, who would compile them and submit them through the Secretariat to Ms. Bernard. The preparation of rules governing reports on an exceptional basis was recommended.

10. Technical and advisory services

373. The budget for technical and advisory services of the Centre for Human Rights should be made available to promote the Convention and the work of the Committee (see chap. I, sect. B, above, suggestion 16/1).

374. A number of regional and international seminars, concerning, *inter alia*, gender sensitivity, *de jure* and de facto equality and reservations to the Convention were suggested by the Committee. A small working group of Committee members would be convened to conceptualize the first such seminar and to examine funding requirements for the first such seminar during 1997 and early 1998. The Committee recommended that the expertise of present and past Committee members should be called upon as a resource for such activities.

11. Reports of States parties and overdue reports

375. In order to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration and to encourage States parties to report in a timely fashion, the Committee decided, on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure, to invite States parties to combine a maximum of two of the reports required under article 18 of the Convention (see chap. I, sect. A, above, decision 16/III).

376. The Secretariat was requested to present a list to the Committee at future sessions of those States parties whose reports had been overdue for more than five years.

12. Reports to be considered at the seventeenth and eighteenth session

377. The Committee decided that the reports of 10 States parties would be considered at its seventeenth session, in July 1997, and that the reports of another 10 States parties would be considered at the eighteenth session, in January 1998.

378. Bearing in mind the criteria of date of submission, geographical balance and reports delayed from earlier sessions, the reports of the following States parties should be considered:

Seventeenth session

Initial reports

Antigua and Barbuda

Armenia

Israel

Namibia

Luxembourg

Second periodic reports

Dominican Republic

Argentina

Italy

Third periodic reports

Australia

Bangladesh

379. In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee decided to consider the following reports:

Initial reports

Azerbaijan

Belize

Croatia

Zimbabwe

Second periodic reports

Equatorial Guinea

Bulgaria

Republic of Korea

Eighteenth session

Initial reports

Azerbaijan

Belize

Croatia

Zaire*

Zimbabwe

Second periodic reports

Bulgaria

Equatorial Guinea

Indonesia

Third periodic reports

Mexico

Republic of Korea

380. In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee decided to consider the initial report of the Czech Republic.

13. United Nations meetings to be attended by the Chairperson or members of the Committee in 1997

381. The Committee recommended that the Chairperson or an alternate should attend the following meetings (listed in order of priority):

(a) Commission on the Status of Women;

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* Effective 17 May 1997, Zaire was renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

(b) Commission on Human Rights;

(c) Meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies;

(d) General Assembly (Third Committee).

14. Members of the pre-session working group for the seventeenth session

382. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the seventeenth session of the Committee and their alternates should be:

Member	Alternate
Ms. Miriam Estrada (Latin America)	Ms. Aída González
Ms. Emna Aouij (Africa)	Ms. Ahoua Ouedraogo
Ms. Ayse Feride Acar (Europe)	Ms. Carlota Bustelo
Ms. Aurora Javate de Dios (Asia)	Ms. Salma Khan

15. Dates of the seventeenth session of the Committee

383. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 1997, the seventeenth session should be held from 7 to 25 July 1997, in New York. The pre-session working group would meet from 30 June to 3 July 1997.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION

384. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 7) at its 311th and 332nd meetings, on 13 and 31 January 1997.

385. The item was introduced by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who presented the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretariat on the analysis of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1994/4);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1997/3);

(c) Report of the International Labour Organization (CEDAW/C/1997/3/Add.2);

(d) Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (CEDAW/C/1997/3/Add.3);

(e) Working paper containing a draft general recommendation on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.II/WP.1).

A. Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

386. At its 332nd meeting, on 31 January, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group II (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.II/WP.2 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3) and took the following action:

1. General recommendation 23

387. The Committee adopted general recommendation 23 on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention relating to women in public life, and authorized Ms. Silvia Cartwright, in conjunction with the Secretariat, to edit the text so that it could be included in final form in the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session (for the text, see part two, chap. I, sect. A).

2. Open-ended working group on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention

388. The Committee designated Ms. Silvia Cartwright to represent the Committee as a resource person at the meetings of the open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention to be held during the forty-first session of the Commission.

B. Statements by senior United Nations officials

Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

389. At the 314th meeting, on 15 January 1997, the Executive Director of UNFPA addressed the Committee, observing that the work of the Committee had been ground-breaking, notably in the context of women's health, and in particular of women's reproductive health. The guarantee of reproductive rights was indispensable in achieving gender equality and the improvement of women, and those goals were essential conditions for achieving sustainable development.

390. She indicated that UNFPA had been honoured to sponsor, together with the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the recent round table on human rights approaches to women's reproductive and sexual health rights, and acknowledged the important role played by the Committee in that initiative. The round table, which was the first occasion at which experts from all six human rights bodies as well as representatives of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations had been brought together to address a thematic issue, made a number of recommendations, in one of which it called upon treaty bodies, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and others to strengthen their working relationships so as to foster a gender-integrated human rights perspective in their respective programmes. The Executive Director made clear that UNFPA had already sought to implement a number of the recommendations of the round table and had met with the Division and the Commissioner to discuss follow-up actions.

391. She also expressed the view that the human rights treaty process was critical in creating an international standard that transcended culture, traditions and societal norms. Although the latter were important forces binding societies together, they should not be used to force women into a subordinate role, damage their health and minimize their contributions to family, the community and their countries.

Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

392. Also at the 314th meeting, the Committee heard an address by the Executive Director of UNICEF. She indicated that 1996 had seen progress towards a close relationship between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and noted that the UNICEF Executive Board had designated the rights of children and women as one of the three areas for follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women. She emphasized the importance of the first joint meeting of the two committees, held at Cairo from 16 to 25 November 1996, and described the several subsequent follow-up meetings to that meeting. She also observed that, under the UNICEF Mission Statement, the organization was guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was committed to the principle of non-discrimination and the equal rights of women and girls.

Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme

393. At the 331st meeting, on 29 January 1997, the Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) addressed the Committee and stressed the commitment of UNDP to the empowerment of women. She indicated that the elimination of discrimination against women had two prongs so as to build country capacity in 134 programme countries to strengthen the enabling policy

and legal framework for gender equality and to improve women's access to assets and resources, including decision-making. She also indicated that UNDP was guided by the primary objective of eliminating poverty and recognizing that for the majority of the world's women, overcoming poverty was the greatest challenge that they faced. She noted that women predominated in the care economy, which tended to be unpaid and undervalued. She also noted that UNDP had taken the first step in the long journey towards bringing human values into the economic equation. She indicated that women must be clear on the value system they will perpetuate through socialization and their own leadership. She emphasized that UNDP would work with the Committee to address discrimination against women.

Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

394. Also at the 331st meeting, the Director of UNIFEM addressed the Committee. She affirmed the continued interest of UNIFEM in supporting the work of the Committee. She acknowledged the work of Ms. Corti, the outgoing Chairperson, and congratulated the new Chairperson, Ms. Salma Khan, assuring her of UNIFEM support to her in her new capacity. She described the work of UNIFEM to promote the Convention and the Committee. In particular, she described the recent initiative of UNIFEM in collaboration with International Women's Rights Action Watch (Asia/Pacific), which allowed eight women from six countries who were and would soon be reporting to the Committee to attend the session and to take part in an intensive orientation on the Convention. She indicated that this had intensified the commitment of UNIFEM to find innovative ways to support implementation of the Convention. In that context, she looked forward to learning the Committee's views on future interaction with women around the world.

VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION

395. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its seventeenth session (agenda 9) at its 333rd meeting, on 31 January 1997.

396. At the same meeting, on the basis of the report of Working Group I, the Committee decided to approve the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Solemn declaration.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Committee.
5. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
7. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
8. Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session.

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

397. At its 333rd meeting, on 31 January 1997, the Committee adopted the report on its sixteenth session (CEDAW/C/1997/L.1 and Add.1-12), as orally amended.

Part Two

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

25 July 1997

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, according to which the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, established pursuant to the Convention, "shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities".

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women held its seventeenth session from 7 to 25 July 1997 at United Nations Headquarters. It adopted its report on the session at its 359th meeting, on 25 July. The report of the Committee is herewith submitted to you for transmission to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Salma KHAN
Chairperson
Committee on the Elimination
of Discrimination against Women

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF STATES PARTIES

A. General recommendation 23 (sixteenth session)*

Women in public life

Article 7

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referendums and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Background

1. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women places special importance on the participation of women in the public life of their countries. The preamble to the Convention states in part:

> "_Recalling_ that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity".

2. The Convention further reiterates in its preamble the importance of women's participation in decision-making as follows:

> "_Convinced_ that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields".

3. Moreover, in article 1 of the Convention, the term "discrimination against women" is interpreted to mean:

> "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field".

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* For the discussion, see part one, chap. VI, and chap. VI below.

4. Other conventions, declarations and international analyses place great importance on the participation of women in public life and have set a framework of international standards of equality. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[2] the Convention on the Political Rights of Women,[3] the Vienna Declaration,[4] paragraph 13 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[5] general recommendations 5 and 8 under the Convention,[6] general comment 25 adopted by the Human Rights Committee,[7] the recommendation adopted by the Council of the European Union on balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process[8] and the European Commission's "How to Create a Gender Balance in Political Decision-making".[9]

5. Article 7 of the Convention obliges States parties to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that they enjoy equality with men in political and public life. The obligation specified in article 7 extends to all areas of public and political life and is not limited to those areas specified in subparagraphs (a), (b) and (c). The political and public life of a country is a broad concept. It refers to the exercise of political power, in particular the exercise of legislative, judicial, executive and administrative powers. The term covers all aspects of public administration and the formulation and implementation of policy at the international, national, regional and local levels. The concept also includes many aspects of civil society, including public boards and local councils and the activities of organizations such as political parties, trade unions, professional or industry associations, women's organizations, community-based organizations and other organizations concerned with public and political life.

6. The Convention envisages that, to be effective, this equality must be achieved within the framework of a political system in which each citizen enjoys the right to vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections held on the basis of universal suffrage and by secret ballot, in such a way as to guarantee the free expression of the will of the electorate, as provided for under international human rights instruments, such as article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

7. The Convention's emphasis on the importance of equality of opportunity and of participation in public life and decision-making has led the Committee to review article 7 and to suggest to States parties that, in reviewing their laws and policies and in reporting under the Convention, they should take into account the comments and recommendations set out below.

Comments

8. Public and private spheres of human activity have always been considered distinct, and have been regulated accordingly. Invariably, women have been assigned to the private or domestic sphere, associated with reproduction and the raising of children, and in all societies these activities have been treated as inferior. By contrast, public life, which is respected and honoured, extends to a broad range of activity outside the private and domestic sphere. Men historically have both dominated public life and exercised the power to confine and subordinate women within the private sphere.

9. Despite women's central role in sustaining the family and society and their contribution to development, they have been excluded from political life and the decision-making process, which nonetheless determine the pattern of their daily

lives and the future of societies. Particularly in times of crisis, this exclusion has silenced women's voices and rendered invisible their contribution and experiences.

10. In all countries, the most significant factors inhibiting women's ability to participate in public life have been the cultural framework of values and religious beliefs, the lack of services and men's failure to share the tasks associated with the organization of the household and with the care and raising of children. In all countries, cultural traditions and religious beliefs have played a part in confining women to the private spheres of activity and excluding them from active participation in public life.

11. Relieving women of some of the burdens of domestic work would allow them to engage more fully in the life of their communities. Women's economic dependence on men often prevents them from making important political decisions and from participating actively in public life. Their double burden of work and their economic dependence, coupled with the long or inflexible hours of both public and political work, prevent women from being more active.

12. Stereotyping, including that perpetrated by the media, confines women in political life to issues such as the environment, children and health, and excludes them from responsibility for finance, budgetary control and conflict resolution. The low involvement of women in the professions from which politicians are recruited can create another obstacle. In countries where women leaders do assume power this can be the result of the influence of their fathers, husbands or male relatives rather than electoral success in their own right.

Political systems

13. The principle of equality of women and men has been affirmed in the constitutions and laws of most countries and in all international instruments. Nonetheless, in the last 50 years, women have not achieved equality, and their inequality has been reinforced by their low level of participation in public and political life. Policies developed and decisions made by men alone reflect only part of human experience and potential. The just and effective organization of society demands the inclusion and participation of all its members.

14. No political system has conferred on women both the right to and the benefit of full and equal participation. While democratic systems have improved women's opportunities for involvement in political life, the many economic, social and cultural barriers they continue to face have seriously limited their participation. Even historically stable democracies have failed to integrate fully and equally the opinions and interests of the female half of the population. Societies in which women are excluded from public life and decision-making cannot be described as democratic. The concept of democracy will have real and dynamic meaning and lasting effect only when political decision-making is shared by women and men and takes equal account of the interests of both. The examination of the reports of States parties shows that where there is full and equal participation of women in public life and decision-making, the implementation of their rights and compliance with the Convention improves.

Temporary special measures

15. While removal of *de jure* barriers is necessary, it is not sufficient. Failure to achieve full and equal participation of women can be unintentional

and the result of outmoded practices and procedures which inadvertently promote men. Under article 4, the Convention encourages the use of temporary special measures to give full effect to articles 7 and 8. Where countries have developed effective temporary strategies in an attempt to achieve equality of participation, a wide range of measures has been implemented, including recruiting, financially assisting and training women candidates, amending electoral procedures, developing campaigns directed at equal participation, setting numerical goals and quotas and targeting women for appointment to public positions, such as the judiciary or other professional groups, that play an essential part in the everyday life of all societies. The formal removal of barriers and the introduction of temporary special measures to encourage the equal participation of both men and women in the public life of their societies are essential prerequisites to true equality in political life. In order, however, to overcome centuries of male domination of the public sphere, women also require the encouragement and support of all sectors of society to achieve full and effective participation, encouragement which must be led by States parties to the Convention, as well as by political parties and public officials. States parties have an obligation to ensure that temporary special measures are clearly designed to support the principle of equality and therefore comply with constitutional principles which guarantee equality to all citizens.

Summary

16. The critical issue, emphasized in the Beijing Platform for Action,[5] is the gap between the de jure and de facto, or the right as against the reality of women's participation in politics and public life generally. Research demonstrates that if women's participation reaches 30 to 35 per cent (generally termed a "critical mass"), there is a real impact on political style and the content of decisions, and political life is revitalized.

17. To achieve broad representation in public life, women must have full equality in the exercise of political and economic power; they must be fully and equally involved in decision-making at all levels, both nationally and internationally, so that they may make their contribution to the goals of equality, development and the achievement of peace. A gender perspective is critical if these goals are to be met and if true democracy is to be assured. For these reasons, it is essential to involve women in public life to take advantage of their contribution, to ensure that their interests are protected and to fulfil the guarantee that the enjoyment of human rights is for all people regardless of gender. Women's full participation is essential not only for their empowerment but also for the advancement of society as a whole.

Article 7 (a) (the right to vote and to be elected)

18. The Convention obliges States parties in constitutions or legislation to take appropriate steps to ensure that women, on the basis of equality with men, enjoy the right to vote in all elections and referendums, and to be elected. These rights must be enjoyed both de jure and de facto.

19. The examination of the reports of States parties demonstrates that, while almost all have adopted constitutional or other legal provisions that grant to both women and men the equal right to vote in all elections and public referendums, in many countries women continue to experience difficulties in exercising this right.

20. Factors which impede these rights include the following:

(a) Women frequently have less access than men to information about candidates and about party political platforms and voting procedures, information which Governments and political parties have failed to provide. Other important factors that inhibit women's full and equal exercise of their right to vote include their illiteracy, their lack of knowledge and understanding of political systems or about the impact that political initiatives and policies will have upon their lives. Failure to understand the rights, responsibilities and opportunities for change conferred by franchise also means that women are not always registered to vote;

(b) Women's double burden of work, as well as financial constraints, will limit women's time or opportunity to follow electoral campaigns and to have the full freedom to exercise their vote;

(c) In many countries, traditions and social and cultural stereotypes discourage women from exercising their right to vote. Many men influence or control the votes of women by persuasion or direct action, including voting on their behalf. Any such practices should be prevented;

(d) Other factors that in some countries inhibit women's involvement in the public or political lives of their communities include restrictions on their freedom of movement or right to participate, prevailing negative attitudes towards women's political participation, or a lack of confidence in and support for female candidates by the electorate. In addition, some women consider involvement in politics to be distasteful and avoid participation in political campaigns.

21. These factors at least partially explain the paradox that women, who represent half of all electorates, do not wield their political power or form blocs which would promote their interests or change government, or eliminate discriminatory policies.

22. The system of balloting, the distribution of seats in Parliament, the choice of district, all have a significant impact on the proportion of women elected to Parliament. Political parties must embrace the principles of equal opportunity and democracy and endeavour to balance the number of male and female candidates.

23. The enjoyment of the right to vote by women should not be subject to restrictions or conditions that do not apply to men or that have a disproportionate impact on women. For example, limiting the right to vote to persons who have a specified level of education, who possess a minimum property qualification or who are literate is not only unreasonable, it may violate the universal guarantee of human rights. It is also likely to have a disproportionate impact on women, thereby contravening the provisions of the Convention.

Article 7 (b) (the right to participate in formulation of government policy)

24. The participation of women in government at the policy level continues to be low in general. Although significant progress has been made and in some countries equality has been achieved, in many countries women's participation has actually been reduced.

25. Article 7 (b) requires States parties to ensure that women have the right to participate fully and be represented in public policy formulation in all

sectors and at all levels. This would facilitate the mainstreaming of gender issues and contribute a gender perspective to public policy-making.

26. States parties have a responsibility, where it is within their control, both to appoint women to senior decision-making roles and, as a matter of course, to consult and incorporate the advice of groups which are broadly representative of women's views and interests.

27. States parties have a further obligation to ensure that barriers to women's full participation in the formulation of government policy are identified and overcome. These barriers include complacency when token women are appointed, and traditional and customary attitudes that discourage women's participation. When women are not broadly represented in the senior levels of government or are inadequately or not consulted at all, government policy will not be comprehensive and effective.

28. While States parties generally hold the power to appoint women to senior cabinet and administrative positions, political parties also have a responsibility to ensure that women are included in party lists and nominated for election in areas where they have a likelihood of electoral success. States parties should also endeavour to ensure that women are appointed to government advisory bodies on an equal basis with men and that these bodies take into account, as appropriate, the views of representative women's groups. It is the Government's fundamental responsibility to encourage these initiatives to lead and guide public opinion and change attitudes that discriminate against women or discourage women's involvement in political and public life.

29. Measures that have been adopted by a number of States parties to ensure equal participation by women in senior cabinet and administrative positions and as members of government advisory bodies include the adoption of a rule whereby, when potential appointees are equally qualified, preference will be given to a woman nominee; the adoption of a rule that neither sex should constitute less than 40 per cent of the members of a public body; a quota for women members of cabinet and for appointment to public office; consultation with women's organizations to ensure that qualified women are nominated for membership in public bodies and offices; and the development and maintenance of registers of such women to facilitate the nomination of women for appointment to public bodies and posts. Where members are appointed to advisory bodies upon the nomination of private organizations, States parties should encourage those organizations to nominate qualified and suitable women for membership in these bodies.

Article 7 (b) (the right to hold public office and to perform all public functions)

30. The examination of the reports of States parties demonstrates that women are excluded from top-ranking positions in cabinets, the civil service and public administration, in the judiciary and in justice systems. Women are rarely appointed to these senior or influential positions and while their numbers may in some States be increasing at the lower levels and in posts usually associated with the home or the family, they form only a tiny minority in decision-making positions concerned with economic policy or development, political affairs, defence, peacemaking missions, conflict resolution or constitutional interpretation and determination.

31. Examination of the reports of States parties also demonstrates that in certain cases the law excludes women from exercising royal powers, from serving

as judges in religious or traditional tribunals vested with jurisdiction on behalf of the State or from full participation in the military. These provisions discriminate against women, deny to society the advantages of their involvement and skills in these areas of the life of their communities and contravene the principles of the Convention.

Article 7 (c) (the right to participate in non-governmental and public and political organizations)

32. The examination of the reports of States parties demonstrates that, on the few occasions when information concerning political parties is provided, women are under-represented or concentrated in less influential roles than men. As political parties are an important vehicle in decision-making roles, Governments should encourage political parties to examine the extent to which women are full and equal participants in their activities and, where this is not the case, should identify the reasons for this. Political parties should be encouraged to adopt effective measures, including the provision of information, financial and other resources, to overcome obstacles to women's full participation and representation and ensure that women have an equal opportunity in practice to serve as party officials and to be nominated as candidates for election.

33. Measures that have been adopted by some political parties include setting aside for women a certain minimum number or percentage of positions on their executive bodies, ensuring that there is a balance between the number of male and female candidates nominated for election, and ensuring that women are not consistently assigned to less favourable constituencies or to the least advantageous positions on a party list. States parties should ensure that such temporary special measures are specifically permitted under anti-discrimination legislation or other constitutional guarantees of equality.

34. Other organizations such as trade unions and political parties have an obligation to demonstrate their commitment to the principle of gender equality in their constitutions, in the application of those rules and in the composition of their memberships with gender-balanced representation on their executive boards so that these bodies may benefit from the full and equal participation of all sectors of society and from contributions made by both sexes. These organizations also provide a valuable training ground for women in political skills, participation and leadership, as do non-governmental organizations.

Article 8

> States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

Comments

35. Under article 8, Governments are obliged to ensure the presence of women at all levels and in all areas of international affairs. This requires that they be included in economic and military matters, in both multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, and in official delegations to international and regional conferences.

36. From an examination of the reports of States parties, it is evident that women are grossly under-represented in the diplomatic and foreign services of

most Governments, particularly at the highest ranks. Women tend to be assigned to embassies of lesser importance to the country's foreign relations and in some cases women are discriminated against in terms of their appointments by restrictions pertaining to their marital status. In other instances spousal and family benefits accorded to male diplomats are not available to women in parallel positions. Opportunities for women to engage in international work are often denied because of assumptions about their domestic responsibilities, including that the care of family dependants will prevent them accepting appointment.

37. Many permanent missions to the United Nations and to other international organizations have no women among their diplomats and very few at senior levels. The situation is similar at expert meetings and conferences that establish international and global goals, agendas and priorities. Organizations of the United Nations system and various economic, political and military structures at the regional level have become important international public employers, but here, too, women have remained a minority concentrated in lower-level positions.

38. There are few opportunities for women and men, on equal terms, to represent Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations. This is frequently the result of an absence of objective criteria and processes for appointment and promotion to relevant positions and official delegations.

39. The globalization of the contemporary world makes the inclusion of women and their participation in international organizations, on equal terms with men, increasingly important. The integration of a gender perspective and women's human rights into the agenda of all international bodies is a government imperative. Many crucial decisions on global issues, such as peacemaking and conflict resolution, military expenditure and nuclear disarmament, development and the environment, foreign aid and economic restructuring, are taken with limited participation of women. This is in stark contrast to their participation in these areas at the non-governmental level.

40. The inclusion of a critical mass of women in international negotiations, peacekeeping activities, all levels of preventive diplomacy, mediation, humanitarian assistance, social reconciliation, peace negotiations and the international criminal justice system will make a difference. In addressing armed or other conflicts, a gender perspective and analysis is necessary to understand their differing effects on women and men.[10]

Recommendations

Articles 7 and 8

41. States parties should ensure that their constitutions and legislation comply with the principles of the Convention, and in particular with articles 7 and 8.

42. States parties are under an obligation to take all appropriate measures, including the enactment of appropriate legislation that complies with their Constitution, to ensure that organizations such as political parties and trade unions, which may not be subject directly to obligations under the Convention, do not discriminate against women and respect the principles contained in articles 7 and 8.

43. States parties should identify and implement temporary special measures to ensure the equal representation of women in all fields covered by articles 7 and 8.

44. States parties should explain the reason for, and effect of, any reservations to articles 7 or 8 and indicate where the reservations reflect traditional, customary or stereotyped attitudes towards women's roles in society, as well as the steps being taken by the States parties to change those attitudes. States parties should keep the necessity for such reservations under close review and in their reports include a timetable for their removal.

Article 7

45. Measures that should be identified, implemented and monitored for effectiveness include, under article 7, paragraph (a), those designed:

(a) To achieve a balance between women and men holding publicly elected positions;

(b) To ensure that women understand their right to vote, the importance of this right and how to exercise it;

(c) To ensure that barriers to equality are overcome, including those resulting from illiteracy, language, poverty and impediments to women's freedom of movement;

(d) To assist women experiencing such disadvantages to exercise their right to vote and to be elected.

46. Under article 7, paragraph (b), such measures include those designed to ensure:

(a) Equality of representation of women in the formulation of government policy;

(b) Women's enjoyment in practice of the equal right to hold public office;

(c) Recruiting processes directed at women that are open and subject to appeal.

47. Under article 7, paragraph (c), such measures include those designed:

(a) To ensure that effective legislation is enacted prohibiting discrimination against women;

(b) To encourage non-governmental organizations and public and political associations to adopt strategies that encourage women's representation and participation in their work.

48. When reporting under article 7, States parties should:

(a) Describe the legal provisions that give effect to the rights contained in article 7;

(b) Provide details of any restrictions to those rights, whether arising from legal provisions or from traditional, religious or cultural practices;

(c) Describe the measures introduced and designed to overcome barriers to the exercise of those rights;

(d) Include statistical data, disaggregated by sex, showing the percentage of women relative to men who enjoy those rights;

(e) Describe the types of policy formulation, including that associated with development programmes, in which women participate and the level and extent of their participation;

(f) Under article 7, paragraph (c), describe the extent to which women participate in non-governmental organizations in their countries, including in women's organizations;

(g) Analyse the extent to which the State party ensures that those organizations are consulted and the impact of their advice on all levels of government policy formulation and implementation;

(h) Provide information concerning, and analyse factors contributing to, the under-representation of women as members and officials of political parties, trade unions, employers organizations and professional associations.

Article 8

49. Measures which should be identified, implemented and monitored for effectiveness include those designed to ensure a better gender balance in the membership of all United Nations bodies, including the Main Committees of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and expert bodies, including treaty bodies, and in appointments to independent working groups or as country or special rapporteurs.

50. When reporting under article 8, States parties should:

(a) Provide statistics, disaggregated by sex, showing the percentage of women in their foreign service or regularly engaged in international representation or in work on behalf of the State, including membership in government delegations to international conferences and nominations for peacekeeping or conflict resolution roles, and their seniority in the relevant sector;

(b) Describe efforts to establish objective criteria and processes for the appointment and promotion of women to relevant positions and official delegations;

(c) Describe steps taken to disseminate widely information on the Government's international commitments affecting women and official documents issued by multilateral forums, in particular, to both governmental and non-governmental bodies responsible for the advancement of women;

(d) Provide information concerning discrimination against women because of their political activities, whether as individuals or as members of women's or other organizations.

B. Decisions*

Decision 17/I. Time limit for submission of additional information

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that States parties presenting reports at the January session in any year should submit any additional information, including any additional reports, prior to 15 September of the previous year. In the case of the July session, the Committee decided that additional information should be submitted by 30 March of that year.

Decision 17/II. Number of reports to be considered at each session

The Committee decided that the maximum number of reports to be considered at each session will normally be eight, drawn from a proposed list of up to ten countries.

Notes

[1] General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

[2] General Assembly resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

[3] General Assembly resolution 640 (VII).

[4] Report of the World Conference on Human Rights, Vienna, 14-25 June 1993 (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I)), chap. III.

[5] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[6] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/43/38), chap. V.

[7] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 40 (A/51/40), annex V.

[8] 96/694/EC, Brussels, 2 December 1996.

[9] European Commission document V/1206/96-EN (March 1996).

[10] See para. 141 of the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995 (Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, chap. I, resolution 1, annex II). See also para. 134, which reads in part: "The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security."

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* For the discussion, see chap. V below.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

A. States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. On 25 July 1997, the closing date of the seventeenth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, there were 160 States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979 and opened for signature, ratification and accession in New York in March 1980. In accordance with article 27, the Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981.

2. A list of States parties to the Convention is contained in annex I to the present report.

B. Opening of the session

3. The Committee held its seventeenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 25 July 1997. The Committee held 26 plenary meetings (334th to 359th), its two working groups each held two meetings, and sub-group of Working Group I also held two meetings.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Salma Khan (Bangladesh), who had been elected at the sixteenth session of the Committee in January 1997.

5. Addressing the Committee on behalf of the Secretary-General and the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women, the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women stated that the seventeenth session of the Committee was an historic occasion as it was the first time that the Committee was meeting for a second session in one year.

6. She noted that the General Assembly's approval of the second session was an interim measure pending the acceptance by two thirds of the States parties to the Convention of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1. Thus far, 14 States parties had accepted the amendment. She added that since the sixteenth session of the Committee, five more countries had become States parties to the Convention, namely, Kyrgyzstan on 10 February 1997, Switzerland on 27 March 1997, Mozambique on 16 April 1997, Lebanon on 21 April 1997 and Turkmenistan on 1 May 1997.

7. She said that significant progress had been made towards the elaboration of an optional protocol to the Convention, which would provide for the right to petition the Committee. The open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women, which had met for the first time during the fortieth session of the Commission, had continued its work during the forty-first session, in March 1997. She stated that the working group had considered a draft optional protocol prepared by its Chairperson, Ms. Aloisia Wörgetter (Austria), on the basis of the Committee's suggestion number 7 and comments made by Member States. She informed the Committee that the first reading of the Chairperson's draft had been completed by the working group, and that the draft would be built upon when the Commission met in 1998. The Commission had again invited a representative of the Committee to attend as a resource person of the open-ended working group

when it met during the forty-second and forty-third sessions of the Commission, in 1998 and 1999, respectively.

8. The Deputy Director informed the Committee that the Commission at its forty-first session had marked its fiftieth anniversary. She noted that, at its forty-second session, the Commission would review four critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] which incorporated issues of central importance to the Committee, namely, violence against women; women in armed conflict; human rights of women; and the girl child. As part of the preparations for the Commission's session, the Division for the Advancement of Women would convene expert group meetings on those issues. She stated that the Division would welcome inputs from the Committee on the substance of the expert group meetings.

9. The Deputy Director stated that the Division was working closely with non-governmental organizations to prepare for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998 and suggested that the Committee might consider making a contribution to the observation of that anniversary.

10. She commended the pre-session working group of the Committee on its work and suggested that the Committee might wish to consider further ways in which the Secretariat could assist the working group to fulfil its task. She also suggested that the Committee might wish to revisit the question of the timing of the pre-session working group.

11. The Deputy Director informed the Committee that since its last session the working methods of United Nations human rights treaty bodies had been subjected to scrutiny by at least two academic conferences. The final report on enhancing their long-term effectiveness had been submitted to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-third session in March 1997.

C. Attendance

12. All members of the Committee attended the seventeenth session, with the exception of Ms. Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling. Ms. Tendai Ruth Bare attended from 11 to 25 July, Ms. Miriam Estrada from 10 to 25 July, Ms. Anne-Lise Ryel and Ms. Ginko Sato from 7 to 11 July and Ms. Mervat Tallawy on 17 and 18 July 1997.

13. A list of the members of the Committee, indicating the duration of their terms of office, appears in annex II to the present report.

D. Solemn declaration

14. At the opening of the seventeenth session, before assuming her functions, the re-elected member of the Committee, Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis (Ethiopia), made the solemn declaration as provided for under rule 10 of the rules of procedure of the Committee.

E. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

15. The Committee considered the provisional agenda and organization of work (CEDAW/C/1997/II/1) at its 334th meeting, on 7 July 1997. Before adopting the agenda, the Committee agreed with the proposal of its Bureau to consider the

recently received third report of Italy on the basis of an English text only, noting that it would do so on an exceptional basis. The agenda as adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the session.

2. Solemn declaration by the new member of the Committee.

3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

4. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Committee.

5. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

6. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

7. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.

8. Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session.

F. Report of the pre-session working group

16. The Committee had decided, at its ninth session,[2] to convene a pre-session working group for five days before each session to prepare lists of questions relating to second and subsequent periodic reports that would be considered by the Committee at the session.

17. The following three members, representing different regional groups, participated in the working group: Aurora Javate de Dios (Asia and the Pacific), Ayse Feride Acar (Europe) and Miriam Estrada (Latin America and the Caribbean). The working group completed its task in four days, the fifth day being a holiday.

18. The working group prepared lists of issues and questions relating to the reports of four States parties, namely, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh and Italy.

19. At the 342nd meeting, on 11 July 1997, the Chairperson of the pre-session working group introduced the report of the group (CEDAW/C/1997/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-4).

G. Composition and organization of work of the working groups

20. At its 335th meeting, on 7 July 1997, the Committee agreed on the composition of its two standing working groups: Working Group I, to consider ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee, and Working Group II, to consider ways and means of implementing article 21 of the Convention. A

sub-group of Working Group I was established to review the draft revised rules of procedure of the Committee.

21. Working Group I was composed of the following members of the Committee: Ayse Feride Acar, Emna Aouij, Desiree Bernard, Silvia Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Yolanda Ferrer Gómez, Aída González, Aurora Javate de Dios, Salma Khan, Yung-Chung Kim, Lin Shangzhen, Ahoua Ouedraogo, Anne Lise Ryel, Ginko Sato, Carmel Shalev and Kongit Sinegiorgis. The sub-group to review the revised draft rules of procedure comprised Desiree Bernard, Silvia Cartwright, Ivanka Corti, Aída González and Kongit Sinegiorgis.

22. Working Group II was composed of the following members of the Committee: Charlotte Abaka, Carlota Bustelo, Silvia Cartwright, Aída González, Sunaryati Hartono, Lin Shangzhen, Ahoua Ouedraogo and Carmel Shalev.

23. The specific issues addressed by Working Groups I and II were the following:

(a) Working Group I. Overdue reports and withdrawal of reports and other practices; draft guidelines on concluding comments; report of the independent expert on the effective functioning of bodies established pursuant to United Nations human rights instruments; methods of work and timing of the pre-session working group; relations with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and other rapporteurs; seminars to be developed by the Committee; and reports to be considered at the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of the Committee;

(b) Working Group II. Method of formulation of general recommendations and long-term programme of work in this regard (that is, articles to be the focus of general recommendations); relations with specialized agencies; possible contribution of the Committee to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, statement for the Commission on Human Rights; and briefing for the resource person on the working group on the optional protocol.

Notes

[1] Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 38 and corrigendum (A/45/38 and Corr.1), paras. 28-31.

III. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH SESSIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

24. The Chairperson of the Committee noted that most of her activities between the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions of the Committee had consisted of participating in seminars on the Convention organized by non-governmental organizations. The only United Nations meeting she had attended was the forty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, which was of particular importance because the open-ended working group of the Commission on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention had met during the session.

25. The Chairperson informed the Committee that, throughout its meetings, the open-ended working group had been appreciative of comments and replies to questions by Ms. Silvia Cartwright, who had participated as a resource person on behalf of the Committee.

26. The Chairperson stated that the Committee had not been directly represented at the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights, but that Ms. Ivanka Corti had attended in her capacity as Chairperson of the meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies. The Chairperson suggested that in the future the Committee should be represented independently.

27. The Chairperson described the various meetings of non-governmental organizations in which she had participated. From 8 to 10 April 1997, she had attended an international round table held at Amman, on equal opportunities for women: a question of rights and humanity, convened by the London-based Rights and Humanity Group. On 8 and 9 May, she had attended a round table at New Delhi on United Nations reforms, good governance and civil society, organized jointly by the Commission on Global Governance, the United Nations Development Fund for Women and Women's Feature Services. From 23 to 28 February, she had visited the Islamic Republic of Iran at the invitation of the Government and had addressed the Women's Solidarity Association of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Convention and the role and responsibility of the Committee and States parties to the Convention in relation to the human and social rights of women. She had visited South Africa from 25 to 31 May, at the invitation of the National Institute for Public Interest Laws and Research, sharing her experiences of training in her own country with respect to the Committee, and giving briefings on the working procedures of the Committee.

28. The Chairperson reminded members that the Committee had adopted general recommendation 23 on articles 7 and 8 at its sixteenth session. She pointed out that various members of the Committee had suggested that new procedures were necessary for the adoption of general recommendations, as was the development by the Committee of a long-term programme of work for general recommendations. She informed the Committee that Ms. Carmel Shalev had proposed that the Committee begin work on a general recommendation on article 12 relating to women's health.

29. The Chairperson recalled that the Committee had decided at its sixteenth session to continue the review of its rules of procedure at the seventeenth session.

30. Ms. Cartwright, the representative of the Committee as resource person to the open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention, noted that support

for the proposed optional protocol, which would provide for the right to petition the Committee, had gained momentum since 1996. She had noted broad support for the inclusion of an inquiry procedure in the protocol. Ms. Cartwright indicated that major issues remained to be considered by the working group, including the question of who should be entitled to lodge complaints with the Committee under any protocol and the resource implications of any protocol. She suggested that the work under any optional protocol should be conducted by a designated sub-group of Committee experts and that the Committee begin to consider working methods and procedures that would be employed when the protocol entered into force. Ms. Cartwright requested the Secretariat to provide the Committee with a report relating to the procedures of the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the Committee against Torture with regard to their communications procedures and suggested that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women consider appropriate procedures for an optional protocol at its nineteenth session.

31. Ms. Corti stated that she had attended the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights in her capacity of chairperson of the meeting of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies. She had also attended the third meeting of the special rapporteurs/representatives/experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and of the advisory services programme in May 1996, in the same capacity. Ms. Corti underlined the importance of the treaty bodies, and particularly the Committee, within the human rights framework and suggested that the Commission on Human Rights should give more prominence to the role of these bodies. She also suggested that the Committee should further develop its links with the Centre for Human Rights and take steps to develop a closer relationship with the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences.

IV. CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

A. Introduction

32. At its seventeenth session, the Committee considered the reports submitted by nine States parties under article 18 of the Convention: two initial reports, two combined initial and second periodic reports, and one combined initial, second and third reports; two combined second and third periodic reports; one third periodic report; and one combined third and fourth periodic report.

33. As decided at its thirteenth session, in 1994, the Committee prepared concluding comments on each report considered.

34. The Committee's concluding comments on the reports of States parties, as prepared respectively by the members of the Committee, and a summary of the introductory presentations by the representatives of the States parties are provided below. The summary records provide more detailed information on the Committee's consideration of the reports of the States parties.

B. Consideration of reports of States parties

1. Initial reports

Armenia

35. The Committee considered the initial report of Armenia (CEDAW/C/ARM/1 and Corr.1) at its 344th, 345th and 349th meetings, on 14 and 16 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.344, 345 and 349).

36. The representative of Armenia emphasized that, after the declaration of independence in 1991, Armenia had begun the implementation of economic and political reforms. The process of transition to a market economy had been affected by the blockade of the main transportation routes, a severe energy crisis and the damage inflicted by the devastating earthquake of 1988. Despite social and economic difficulties, the Government of Armenia attached great importance to the international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which it had acceded in 1993 without reservations. To secure the sufficient implementation of the Convention, the Government had started to carry out legal reforms aimed at adjusting existing legislation to international norms and standards specified in that instrument. The Fourth World Conference on Women had marked a turning point for women's rights in Armenia.

37. The representative noted that the initial report had been submitted to the Secretariat in 1995. The report had been prepared during the period of economic and political restructuring and the blockade on goods, services and energy imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey and in a situation of continuing conflict between Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

38. The report had been prepared in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health and appropriate commissions of the National Assembly. The corrigendum, dated 11 February 1997, replaced part of the original report and reflected changes resulting from the

adoption of the Constitution in 1995, developments in the legal framework and actual conditions for Armenian women.

39. The representative informed the Committee that there was no special institution responsible for the protection of women's rights. The Ministry for Social Security and the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights were the main institutions currently responsible for women's issues in the country.

40. The representative of Armenia outlined the political, economic and legal situation in Armenia and its impact on the status of women. He stated that the new Constitution underlined the principle of equality of human rights of women and men. Legally, women enjoyed full guarantees against discrimination but the difficult socio-economic situation in the country had not always allowed their full implementation. That situation, which had resulted in a drastic decline in the standard of living, an increase in the unemployment rate and impoverishment, had affected women more than men. Hence, the Parliament had adopted in 1991 a resolution on urgent measures for the protection of women, maternity and childhood and the strengthening of the family, which granted supplementary rights to women and mothers, especially single mothers, in the areas of work and social security. A national programme of action had been launched, inter alia, to disseminate laws on protection of women's rights and to establish information and legal counselling services.

41. In Armenia, a majority of women had achieved a high level of education and often outnumbered men in the area of higher education. However, women accounted for a higher level of unemployment than men and occupied few positions at all levels of decision-making. Women in the labour market were usually concentrated in traditional female occupations. In spite of the low representation of women in governmental positions, they were active in social and economic life. During recent years, more than 30 women's organizations had emerged in the country and covered a wide spectrum of issues, including the preparation of women for leadership roles in society and the protection of their rights.

42. With regard to women's reproductive health, the representative noted that women had the right to abortion until the fourteenth week of pregnancy. He stated, however, that in reality abortion was the primary method of birth control in Armenia and there was a lack of family planning services. The Government was taking measures to disseminate information about contraceptives and to improve their availability.

43. The representative indicated that the Government of Armenia was particularly concerned about the large number of refugees in the country, with women constituting the majority, and was implementing a wide set of measures aimed at their integration into social and economic life.

44. The representative concluded by stating that the Government of Armenia recognized that much remained to be done to achieve full equality between women and men. He assured the Committee of the willingness of the Government to continue to take all the necessary measures to implement the principles of the Convention.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

45. The Committee welcomed the presentation by the Government of Armenia and commended it on its ratification of the Convention without reservations so soon

after independence in 1991 and on the timely submission of the initial report, which contained detailed information about the implementation of the Convention in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. It expressed its appreciation of the willingness of the representatives of Armenia to engage in an open, candid constructive dialogue with the Committee.

Positive aspects

46. The Committee commended the Government on its effort to carry out reform of its laws so as to align them with the standards of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

47. It noted with satisfaction the incorporation of the Convention in domestic law, and its precedence over conflicting national legislation. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Government had translated the Convention into Armenian and disseminated it widely.

48. The Committee acknowledged favourably the Government's intention to introduce a fundamental legal reform within the ongoing revision of the criminal code, in respect of violence against women and their sexual exploitation through prostitution and trafficking.

49. The Committee observed with satisfaction the exceptionally high level of literacy and education in Armenia, in particular among women.

50. The Committee commended the Government on its identification of four priority areas of concern in relation to women's health, and on its programme to establish a system of family planning services and to provide contraceptives to women free of charge.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

51. The Committee noted that the immediate effect of the competitive politics introduced as a result of democratization in Armenia had been adverse to the position of women. This was reflected in their dramatic loss of representation at all levels of decision-making.

52. The Committee also noted that the process of transition to a market economy appeared to have resulted in the economic marginalization of women, exacerbated by the economic toll of the 1988 earthquake, and the armed conflict around Nagorny Karabakh.

53. The Committee noted cultural stereotypes which overemphasized the traditional role of women as mothers in a protective and restrictive way.

Principal areas of concern

54. The Committee expressed and reiterated its gravest concern about the absence of a specific national machinery for the advancement of women and the elimination of discrimination against women.

55. The Committee was extremely concerned that the Government of Armenia had until now failed to acknowledge and address the matter of violence against women, which appeared to be a subject of taboo in Armenian society, although there were many indicators of it being as serious a problem as in other societies.

56. The Committee was also extremely concerned about the high rate of unemployment (over 60 per cent according to the report), the occupational segregation of women in low-paying sectors and the small number of women in positions at the senior management level.

57. The Committee expressed its concern about the fact that there were no policies and programmes in place to guarantee security and social benefits to women who worked in the informal sector.

58. The Committee also noted with concern the paternalistic restrictions imposed by the labour laws, which were aimed at protecting maternity and resulted in the legal limitation of women's employment opportunities and choices.

59. Similarly, the Committee was concerned about the Government's report of increasing prostitution, especially in relation to the limited economic options for women in Armenia. The Committee noted the lack of access of women engaging in prostitution to appropriate health services, including for the prevention and care of HIV/AIDS.

60. As to the subject of women's health, the Committee expressed its deep concern with regard to the Government's plan to consider proposals for privatization of the health system. The Committee emphasized the adverse effects for women and other vulnerable groups of privatization in the health area, even in highly developed countries.

Suggestions and recommendations

61. The Committee strongly urged the Government of Armenia to establish a national machinery for the advancement of women, fully staffed and resourced, so as to integrate the perspective of women's human rights and gender analysis into all ongoing policy-making and strategic development planning activities.

62. The Committee recommended that the Government take temporary special measures to create employment opportunities for women, including special credit and loan programmes for women entrepreneurs.

63. The Committee also recommended that temporary special measures be adopted to remedy the severe decrease in the political representation of women since independence, and to increase their participation in all areas of public life.

64. The Committee further recommended that the Government give due attention to the subject of violence against women, by encouraging a public discussion of its various forms, initiating appropriate legislation, training law enforcement officers, judges and health professionals, including adequate numbers of female personnel, to identify, manage and eliminate the manifestations of violence against women, and by guaranteeing that the necessary psycho-social and health services are available to victims of violence, with particular attention to internally displaced and refugee women.

65. The Committee strongly urged the Government to use the education system and the electronic media to combat the traditional stereotype of women "in the noble role of mother" and to raise awareness of the role of men in caring and their responsibility for parenting.

66. The Committee suggested that there was a strong need to collect information and sex disaggregated data in all areas, in particular as regards violence against women, prostitution and health.

67. The Committee suggested that in the planning and implementation of privatization policies and programmes the Government of Armenia should ensure that it fulfilled its social responsibilities and obligations under international human rights law so that its policies and programmes would not deprive women and other vulnerable groups of enjoyment of their human rights, especially in the area of health.

68. The Committee requested the Government to address the concerns included in the present comments in its next report, and to include information on the implementation of the Committee's general recommendations, particularly general recommendation 19 on violence against women. It also requested the wide dissemination of these comments throughout Armenia.

Namibia

69. The Committee considered the initial report of Namibia (CEDAW/C/NAM/1) at its 336th, 337th and 342nd meetings, on 8 and 11 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.336, 337 and 342).

70. The report was introduced by the Director-General of Namibia's Department of Women Affairs in the Office of the President. She recounted that Namibia had acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, without reservations, on 23 November 1992, within two years of gaining its independence. The Convention had served as a complement to a Constitution designed to promote the rights of women.

71. The Department of Women Affairs had been established shortly after independence in 1990. Its aim was to ensure the integration of women into the overall development process, to guide policy formulation, to monitor its implementation and to see that the gender component was always taken into account. The Department actively publicized the Convention and encouraged women to assert their rights. The representative explained that all government policies and programmes in Namibia would be guided by a more integrated gender policy to be finalized in 1997.

72. She explained that Namibia's initial report described nine gender-sectoral committees comprising representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations who were consulted in the implementation of national programmes to ensure that all government policies and programmes were gender-sensitive.

73. The initial report, which had been submitted to the Secretariat in 1996, covered the period from 1992 to 1995. The representative summarized the report and supplied further information up to 1997, thereby giving an up-to-date summary of the situation in Namibia. She highlighted the Married Persons Equality Act, which had been passed since the submission of the report, and which provided for equality between spouses in financial transactions, marital property and guardianship of children.

74. The Committee was informed that the Department of Women Affairs was in the process of formulating a national gender policy, and that the Law Reform and Development Commission had responsibility for guiding law reform, which would remove all existing legal discrimination against women. Violence against women

and children had emerged as one of the greatest challenges to the advancement of women in Namibia, and was perceived to be a widespread and serious problem despite a lack of current statistical information. Legislation was currently being enacted to address violence against women. Reports of rape and attempted rape were increasing annually, and there were calls for law reform in that area, as the current law remained discriminatory in some areas and was considered ineffective.

75. Religious beliefs, cultural practices and remaining inequities under general and customary laws were factors that continued to allow men to dominate women in the family context. Sexual stereotyping of women as mothers had led to difficulties for many women in choosing career paths other than motherhood. Regional gender workshops organized by the Government were being used to combat sexual stereotyping.

76. The representative stated that there had been a slight improvement in the proportion of women in political positions, and that the impact of women in Parliament would be strengthened by the Parliamentary Women's Caucus. She emphasized that the implementation of affirmative action would serve to attract the participation of more women in politics. Women still tended to be under-represented in senior positions in both government and the private sector. Namibia's first woman judge had been appointed since the initial report was completed, and the post of Ombudsman was occupied by a woman.

77. The Namibian Constitution guaranteed the right of education to all persons, and education was compulsory up to 16 years of age. Female enrolment had increased at every age level, and there had been a corresponding improvement in female literacy among younger age groups. Teenage pregnancy, which was common, was the biggest challenge to female educational advancement. It was a major factor in the school drop-out rate for girls.

78. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the labour sector were forbidden by the 1992 Labour Act. Equal pay for equal work was a mandate of the Act, although women currently worked in occupations that tended to be associated with low levels of remuneration. Rural women were the largest demographic group in Namibia.

79. Namibia's fertility rate was one of the highest in the world and the Government continued to be committed to reducing that rate through public campaigns and expanded family planning services. Abortion was illegal, except in cases of incest and rape and for reasons of health of the mother or baby. Legal abortions and infanticide were significant problems in Namibia, but the law on abortion and sterilization was under discussion. There was also a high incidence of polygamy in some communities. HIV and AIDS were increasing at an alarming rate, especially among women, as a result of their low social and economic status.

80. Workshops to implement the Beijing Platform for Action were being held nationally, and community programmes were being developed. The Convention and the Platform for Action were seen as complementary and of equal importance, but she noted that the implementation of both was affected by a lack of funds. She reminded the Committee that Namibia had made a firm commitment at the Fourth World Conference on Women to pay special attention in four areas: education, training and the girl child; women and law; violence against women and children; and health.

Best copy available

81. The representative concluded by stating that Namibia had made great strides in improving the position of women, although it would take more time to transform Namibia into a truly gender-equal society. That was a realizable objective because of the willingness of Namibian women to have their voices heard, and the progressive realization of the guarantees in the Constitution and the Convention, and the promises of the Platform for Action.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

82. The Committee thanked the State party for its report, which was both well-structured and contained detailed information. It also complimented the Director-General of the Department of Women Affairs in the Office of the President for her lucid and frank presentation.

83. The Committee was satisfied with the detailed analysis given in the report, which presented a clear and frank picture of the situation of women in Namibia.

84. The Committee commended the Government of Namibia for the peaceful transition to an independent State and for demonstrating general respect for the human rights of all people in Namibia.

Positive aspects

85. The Committee commended the Government of Namibia for ratifying the Convention without reservations so soon after its successful and long struggle for independence.

86. The Committee noted with satisfaction that non-governmental organizations had been involved in the preparation of the report.

87. The establishment of the Department of Women Affairs and the recent upgrading of the Department to cabinet level were also commended by the Committee. The Committee noted with satisfaction the achievements of the Department.

88. The Committee noted with appreciation the establishment of the Law Reform and Development Commission and the legal measures that had been put in place following the ratification of the Convention. It noted that they had contributed to the impressive progress towards gender equality.

89. The Committee welcomed the Married Persons Equality Act and looked forward to the enactment of the proposed Children's Act.

90. The Committee noted with satisfaction the positive developments in the area of women in decision-making and, in particular, the appointment in December 1996 of a woman as the first Ombudsman.

91. The Committee commended Namibia for the establishment of women and child abuse centres.

92. The Committee welcomed the appointment of the first woman judge.

93. It commended the Government for focusing on affirmative action as a means of closing the gap in gender equality.

94. The Committee welcomed the establishment of nine gender-sectoral committees and commended the programme of sensitization of parliamentarians and public officers with respect to the Convention.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

95. The Committee noted that women in Namibia continued to face persistent discrimination which arose out of some traditional and customary laws.

96. The Committee also identified the general lack of knowledge relating to human and legal rights as an obstacle to the implementation of the Convention.

97. The Committee noted that poverty afflicted the majority of the Namibian population and a majority of the poor were women. It considered that women's poverty made it difficult for them to fulfil their aspirations as guaranteed by the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

98. The Committee expressed its concern that the report did not address the Committee's general recommendations.

99. The Committee identified as areas of concern the lack of a time-frame in the implementation of affirmative action programmes and also the lack of programmes to sustain the objectives and achievements of those programmes.

100. The Committee was concerned with the lack of human rights education, as well as education for legal literacy, and advocacy programmes to achieve de facto equality.

101. The Committee was greatly concerned about the prevalence of domestic violence and the persistence of certain traditional practices which reinforced stereotyped attitudes and strengthened discrimination against women.

102. The Committee expressed concern about the fact that despite new laws, women, in particular those in the rural areas, were unable to own land.

103. The Committee was concerned that the issue of maternity leave was dealt with under article 4 of the Convention as it was of the view that such a measure was not a measure of affirmative action.

104. The Committee noted with concern that the Married Persons Equality Act did not sufficiently address discrimination in the family.

105. The Committee expressed concern that the health of prostitutes was not taken into account and that, unlike other women, they did not have access to health care.

106. The Committee noted with serious concern the low level of participation of women in higher education and the high drop-out rate of girls from the formal education system.

107. The Committee also expressed concern with respect to the current inadequacy of the law on rape and other forms of violence against women.

108. The Committee was concerned that pregnant teenage women were punished by expulsion from school.

134. The representative observed that the compilation of the report had afforded an opportunity to take a comprehensive view of the achievements in and the obstacles to the advancement of women in Israel. It had created an institutional awareness of women's social concerns and needs. Non-governmental organizations had had the opportunity to offer feedback on the report and this had led to a new forum of ongoing dialogue between government and civil society.

135. She stated that Israel placed great importance on the situation and status of women in society, and noted that the issue of women's status in society had constantly been on the national agenda. A constitutional and normative infrastructure had been established and a continuous process of review and passage of legislation was taking place with regard to the status of women. Implementation mechanisms had been established and developed according to need. She noted that the process applied equally to all women in Israel - Jewish and Arab alike.

136. The representative elaborated the two parameters informing women's status. The first reflected the basic quality of women's lives, and the second involved the evaluation of participation of women in public life, the workplace, wage equity and educational opportunities.

137. She noted that discrimination against women was defined by Israel's legal system in conformity with the definition contained in article 1 of the Convention. The principle of equality was understood as being substantive and not merely formal and took into account de facto discrimination and the importance of affirmative action.

138. Legislative developments had done much to advance the status of all women in Israel and played an important role in educating the younger generation and the public in general concerning the special norms adopted for the advancement of women. The process of instilling norms and values of gender equality was an ongoing one, and several important bills in this area were at different stages of the legislative process.

139. The representative described various governmental initiatives to promote the advancement of women. Among them were the appointment of the Prime Minister's Adviser on the Status of Women, and the Knesset Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women.

140. She indicated that education was a key factor in any real and stable change of perceptions and of gender roles. The reduction of illiteracy among women was encouraging and women's enrolment in universities was greater than that of men. Women's health was steadily improving among all population groups. Women's participation in the workforce was related to educational level and family situation but women had a greater tendency to work part time.

141. She explained that the scope of social and work-related benefits was one of the most influential factors affecting women's economic status in Israel. Maternity insurance and the system of alimony payments benefited women positively. She noted that despite the lack of sufficient data on the economic situation of single-parent families headed by women, legislation had been enacted to ensure generous support.

142. The representative described the situation in Israel with regard to marriage, age of marriage, cohabitation, child custody, property distribution, selection of family names and new reproductive technologies. She stated that much progress had been made with regard to gender-based violence in Israel.

There had been legislative developments, to which the work of several investigative and reform committees had contributed extensively, as well as practical developments.

143. There was a lack of concrete data and information on the issues of prostitution and exploitation of women and the Israeli legal framework took an abolitionist approach to prostitution. The representative drew the Committee's attention to the position of certain groups of women in Israeli society, including Bedouin women and women immigrants from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia.

144. She stated that social patterns, gender roles and stereotyping affected the advancement of women in any society. Women's involvement in the media was an example of this; the position of women vis-à-vis the Israeli media was inconsistent. Although employment of women in the media and coverage of certain women's issues were increasing, stereotyping of women as sex objects and victims continued to some extent.

145. While there had been little progress in the advancement of women at the national political level, women's participation in local politics was more positive. Women's participation at the senior levels of government and the civil service had shown gradual improvement as well. Following enactment of the relevant legislation, the introduction of affirmative action into the boards of directors of government companies and into the civil service had contributed significantly to the advancement of women.

146. The representative concluded by drawing the Committee's attention to the employment of women in the security and defence forces. That participation had received extensive attention and been the subject of debate because of the important social role played by army service in Israeli society. The "glass ceiling" phenomenon could be seen in the defence forces, with women's promotion taking, on average, nine months longer than that of men.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

147. The Committee thanked the State party for its very comprehensive and frank report, which dealt with all the articles of the Convention from both the juridical and the sociological perspectives. It also appreciated the high level of the delegation and complimented the representative of the State party for her lucid presentation.

148. The Committee appreciated the fact that the report was submitted on time and followed the Committee's guidelines.

149. The Committee was pleased that non-governmental organizations had been given an opportunity to consider the report and that they were able to submit supplementary reports.

150. The Committee was disturbed that all the questions put forward by members to the representatives of Israel were not responded to in the Government's written answers. The Committee is of the view that response to all the questions would have clarified issues and problems.

Positive aspects

151. The Committee commended the fact that Israel had developed progressive legislation as well as comprehensive programmes on violence against women and on equal employment opportunities.

152. Although equality was not part of the basic law of Israel, the Committee commended the fact that the Supreme Court could give effect to the principle of equality in its judgements.

153. The Committee noted with satisfaction that most Israeli women had a high level of education, especially at the tertiary level.

154. The Committee commended the very extensive analysis of women in the media and the programmes to reorient society against stereotypical images of women.

155. The Committee commended the existence of the compulsory National Health Insurance Law of 1995, which guarantees universal access to health care for all communities.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

156. The Committee considered that the fact that no basic law embodied the principle of equality or prohibited discrimination hindered the implementation of the Convention.

157. The Committee regretted the fact that Israel had maintained its reservations to articles 7 (b) and 16 of the Convention. It also regretted the fact that women could not become religious judges and that the religious laws that to a considerable degree govern family relations discriminated against women.

158. The Committee considered that the persistence of conflict and violence hindered the implementation of the Convention. Moreover, as a consequence of the ongoing conflict, much power was concentrated in the armed forces. Women, who were not represented in senior leadership in the armed forces, were discriminated against and their perspective on peacekeeping and their negotiating skills were not utilized.

Principal areas of concern

159. The Committee noted with concern that the Government had not formulated an overall plan or measures to implement the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action.

160. The Committee was very concerned about the fact that there was no specific governmental machinery responsible for promoting and coordinating policies for women.

161. The Committee was concerned about the fact that non-Jewish women had worse living conditions than Jewish women. They received a lower level of education, participated less in the government service and occupied limited decision-making posts.

162. The Committee was also concerned because non-Jewish women enjoyed poorer health, resulting in very high maternal and infant mortality rates. There were also fewer employment opportunities available to them.

163. The Committee was concerned about remaining instances of polygamy, forced marriage and genital mutilation, as well as "honour killings".

164. The Committee noted with concern that a very low percentage of women occupied political decision-making posts and that the situation had barely changed over the years.

165. The Committee noted with concern that a marked disparity existed between the average earnings of women and men in many sectors and that women were also disproportionately represented in part-time employment.

166. The Committee was concerned about the fact that many more women than men worked in the informal sector and performed unpaid work, thereby prospectively limiting their access to benefits associated with the formal sector.

167. The Committee noted with concern that the public health system allocated considerable resources to in vitro fertilization, yet contraceptives were not free of charge.

168. The Committee was concerned about the fact that a large number of women were arrested for prostitution. The Committee was likewise concerned about the large number of advertisements for sex services in daily newspapers, which contributed significantly to the spread of prostitution.

169. The Committee was concerned because despite the existing legislation, cases of violence against women still occurred frequently, owing in large measure to traditional ideas of the roles of women and negative societal attitudes towards the problem of violence against women.

Suggestions and recommendations

170. The Committee recommended that the Government of Israel should ensure that the Convention was implemented throughout the territory under its jurisdiction.

171. The Government or the parliament should adopt an overall plan for the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action through specific measures and within a definite time-frame.

172. The Committee recommended that the right to equality and the prohibition of both direct and indirect discrimination against women should be reflected in a basic law.

173. The Committee suggested that in order to guarantee the same rights in marriage and family relations in Israel and to comply fully with the Convention, the Government should complete the secularization of the relevant legislation, place it under the jurisdiction of the civil courts and withdraw its reservations to the Convention.

174. The preamble to the Convention states that full development and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields. The Committee thus recommended that all necessary measures be taken to ensure peace with the full participation of all women, Jewish and Christian, Muslim and Druze alike. This was necessary to create an environment where women could enjoy their rights fully and so that equality of opportunities in economic and social development, especially of rural women, could be assured.

175. The Committee looked forward to the adoption of the bill creating the governmental machinery to be known as the "Authority on the Status of Women" and

hoped that the machinery would be given sufficient resources to carry out its work.

176. The Committee recommended that measures to guarantee the exercise of human rights of non-Jewish women, including those living in the rural areas, particularly in relation to health, education and employment, should be intensified. Special measures should be taken to close the gap between Arab and Jewish schools and address the higher drop-out rates of Arab and Bedouin girls. Adequate resources should be allocated for school facilities and education opportunities, including scholarships. Further, the participation of Arab women in the civil service and in decision-making posts should be increased.

177. The Committee recommended that the Government strengthen its efforts and expand its actions to eliminate violence against women, especially violence within the family, in all communities.

178. The Committee strongly suggested that the Government of Israel take necessary steps to eliminate practices which could not be justified on any grounds, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation, honour killings and polygamy.

179. The Committee recommended that satellite accounts should be used to evaluate the value of unpaid work and that they should be incorporated into the national accounts.

180. The Committee recommended that some of the resources allocated to the treatment of infertility should be used to study its causes and its prevention.

181. The Committee recommended that public health services supply free and accessible contraceptives.

182. The Committee requested the Government of Israel to address the following issues in its next report: the status of disabled women; how indirect discrimination in the workplace is dealt with; the leave entitlement of mothers and fathers for the birth of a child or when they have young children, and the actual use made of such entitlement; the impact on the social roles of women and men of programmes aimed at changing stereotypes; programmes for gender sensitization of the judiciary, police and health professionals; and financial support provided by the Government for all non-governmental organizations in the territory of Israel.

183. The Committee requested the wide dissemination in Israel of these concluding comments so as to make individuals aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard.

Luxembourg

184. The Committee considered the initial and second periodic reports of Luxembourg (CEDAW/C/LUX/1 and 2) at its 338th, 339th and 344th meetings, on 9 and 11 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.338, 339 and 344).

185. The reports were introduced by the Director of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women, who thanked the Committee for considering the reports so soon after their submission. She informed the Committee that Luxembourg had recently assumed the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Union and would put emphasis on the equality of women and men during its term, in particular in the context of the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and in the negotiations on the expansion of the European Union to include

the countries of Central Europe as well as in a European conference on organization of work.

186. In its "Action Plan 2000", the national action plan to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Luxembourg had committed itself to the withdrawal of the two reservations to the Convention. The reservation to article 7, concerning the hereditary transmission of the crown of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the oldest male descendant, might be removed in the near future, as the Sovereign had agreed, in principle, to a ministerial proposal to change article 3 of the National Constitution to that effect. Attempts to withdraw the reservation to article 16 relating to choice of surname of children would meet with strong opposition, as the tradition whereby children took their father's surname was deeply rooted and long-standing.

187. The representative noted that difficulties had been encountered in attempts to enlist women under their own names on electoral lists and not, as had been the custom, under their husband's surname. The Act of 18 August 1995 had established full equality of women and men with regard to names on electoral lists.

188. The Committee was informed about the various steps being taken to establish a national machinery, as had been requested by the women's movement for over 30 years. Initially, a service within the Ministry of the Family and Solidarity had dealt with the advancement of women. In 1995, the creation of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women had given women and men the appropriate institutional mechanism, separate from family policy, to ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for both sexes.

189. The representative outlined the three priorities of action of the Ministry: mainstreaming of gender concerns; education, training and employment; and social policy. In the field of mainstreaming, the Action Plan 2000 described measures to be taken in the short, medium and long term. An effort had been made to mainstream gender concerns into education and training, sustainable development, and development assistance to offer gender training to the civil service. The National Council of Luxembourg Women had initiated a major strategy on mainstreaming gender equality, notably by inviting local communities to designate focal points for the advancement of women and to set up commissions.

190. The representative pointed out that, in the field of education, training and employment, the first step was to change mentalities among all members of society and that that should start at an early stage. Various partners at the community level were involved in combating sex-role stereotypes, including teachers' and parents' associations and non-governmental organizations. The second step was to promote gender equality in the workplace. Laws on sexual harassment and the designation of gender focal points in the private sector had been elaborated. The Government also intended to designate gender focal points in the civil service. Discrimination in the workplace persisted, however, with women earning only 70 per cent of the salary of their male counterparts.

191. Referring to social policy, the Director stressed that the major concern of her Ministry was guaranteed individual social insurance for all women. A successful campaign had been launched, targeting girls and young women aged from 12 to 21 years, to combat violence against women, offering information, shelter and counselling. She informed the Committee that Luxembourg would take the initiative, including at the European and international levels, to combat trafficking in and sexual exploitation of women. Specific measures with regard

to housing, guidance and administration had been taken to integrate migrant women into society.

192. The representative noted that equality between women and men was not yet a de facto reality in Luxembourg and that it was necessary to raise the awareness of men about their responsibilities. A change of mentality and behaviour was needed. That would be a long and complex process involving all actors in society.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

193. The Committee welcomed the first and second periodic reports of Luxembourg, which followed the Committee's guidelines.

194. The Committee expressed its satisfaction for the excellent presentation of the representative of the Government of Luxembourg and noted that Luxembourg currently held the Presidency of the European Union. The Committee thanked the representative for her explanation of the historical and cultural context of the country and for the additional information provided in the replies to the questions of experts, in particular with regard to policy and the direction of the national action plan for the implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

195. The Committee welcomed the separation of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women from the Ministry of the Family and noted that the Ministry aimed to promote the mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programmes of the Government and local authorities and thereby recognized gender as a fundamental dimension in all areas of private and public life.

196. The Committee noted with appreciation the preparation of the national action plan as a follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women. It commended the action plan, which included the new governmental policy for cooperation with developing countries and the provision of funds for the advancement of women.

197. The Committee welcomed the programme of the Ministry for the Advancement of Women to disseminate the Convention widely and in particular noted its new publication for schools and training courses.

198. The Committee also welcomed the new measures to combat violence against women and the newly established facilities for young women victims of sexual violence.

199. The Committee further welcomed the permanent contact and consultations the Ministry for the Advancement of Women had established with non-governmental organizations, which had facilitated the elaboration of the action plan and equality policy in general.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

200. The Committee noted that the reservations made by the State party to articles 7 and 16 (g) impeded the full implementation of the provisions of the Convention. Although there had been attempts to remove the reservation to

article 7, the Committee found it difficult to understand why greater efforts had not been made to address the reservation to article 16 (g).

Principal areas of concern

201. The Committee expressed concern at the fact that a clear definition of the principle of equality between the sexes was not expressly enshrined in the Constitution. It noted that failure to include an express constitutional provision required legislative amendment on a case-by-case basis to ensure equality in each sector.

202. Insofar as the implementation of article 11 of the Convention was concerned, the Committee noted with concern the persistence of discrimination, with the majority of women in part-time jobs and the evident disparities in treatment between the public and private sectors.

203. The Committee expressed concern at the lack of sex disaggregated statistical information in the fields of labour, health, prostitution and rural women. It noted that that impeded assessment of the progress in the implementation of the Convention over time.

204. The Committee expressed concern about the fact that, although a constitutional review was currently under way, there was no information as to when the principle of equality would be discussed.

205. The Committee expressed its concern about the persistence of gender disparities, in particular in labour conditions, job evaluation and gender-based job insecurity and with regard to the evident discrimination women suffered in the private sector.

206. The Committee was concerned about the fact that the State party had not yet made use of article 4 of the Convention to ensure equitable participation of women in the conduct of public affairs and, generally, in the economic, social and cultural life of the country. Additionally, the Committee regretted that effective measures to overcome attitudes based on traditional roles, which hindered equality between men and women, had not yet been adopted.

207. The Committee noted with concern the high level of violence against women, in particular domestic violence, and regretted the delay in adoption of a law on sexual harassment.

208. The Committee was concerned at the existing national provisions concerning the implementation of article 6 of the Convention, in particular the lack of effective measures for the protection and rehabilitation of women prostitutes.

209. The Committee was also concerned by the lack of gender analysis of women's health needs, in particular in relation to their reproductive rights.

210. The Committee was deeply concerned at the existing legislation on abortion, which penalized women. It noted that, at the same time, no sufficient mechanisms to prevent abortion, including free distribution of contraceptives, were in place.

211. The Committee was concerned about the fact that no adequate steps had been taken to ensure that the high number of women foreigners in Luxembourg were able to take advantage of the guarantees in the Convention.

212. The Committee expressed its concern in respect of restrictions on women in relation to remarriage after divorce.

Suggestions and recommendations

213. The Committee strongly suggested the introduction of steps towards the removal of the reservations to articles 7 and 16 (g) as promised in the oral presentation of the representative of the Government. The Committee encouraged the Ministry for the Advancement of Women in its efforts to that end and requested the Government to keep it informed of developments on the matter.

214. The Committee urged that constitutional reforms include the incorporation of the principle of equality in the text of the Constitution.

215. The Committee suggested the introduction of temporary special measures to strengthen the participation of women in the political, economic and social life of the country.

216. In the light of recent achievements in some other countries of the European Union in the implementation of article 7 of the Convention, the Committee recommended that the Government examine strategies to ensure the better representation of women in decision-making posts in all fields.

217. The Committee recommended that the Ministry for the Advancement of Women initiate the adoption of measures aimed at eliminating the gap between the treatment of women and men in the public and private sectors. The Committee further recommends that the Government examine the gap between women and men in the labour force, particularly in the context of part-time work.

218. The Committee recommended that concrete measures be taken to implement fully the conclusions of The Hague Ministerial Declaration, which are in the spirit of article 6 of the Convention.

219. In relation to the removal of the stereotyped attitudes and perceptions of the role of women in society and to raise the awareness of men of their family responsibilities, the Committee suggested that educational programmes in schools be reoriented in accordance with article 5 of the Convention.

220. In the field of violence against women, the Committee recalled its general recommendation 19 (eleventh session), on violence,[1] and suggested that the Ministry take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to combat the sexual abuse of women, in particular within the family, so as to ensure effective protection of women against domestic and other forms of violence.

221. The Committee emphasized the need for the adoption of effective measures to prevent abortion and for a review of the social insurance benefits system so as to allow women to have access to free contraceptive methods.

222. The Committee recommended that an analysis of women's health needs be undertaken and that awareness-raising campaigns on mammography continue so as to ensure that more women made use of that service.

223. The Committee recommended that legislative steps be taken to remove outdated restricting women's right to remarry after divorce, as well as those that classify children as "legitimate/natural" or "illegitimate", a distinction that is in the spirit of neither the present Convention nor the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Luxembourg is also a party.

224. The Committee also recommended that the action plan include provisions for the better integration of refugee and migrant women into the social and economic life of Luxembourg.

225. The Committee encouraged the State party to pursue and develop further its policy of disseminating information and increasing awareness of the Convention. It recommended the integration of the provisions of the Convention and women's rights into the training curricula of professional groups, such as teachers, law enforcement and correctional officers, judges, social workers and health personnel, who deal with women.

226. The Committee requested the Government, when preparing its third report, to take into account the Committee's general recommendations, the present concluding comments and the issues addressed during the constructive dialogue with the Committee at its seventeenth session. The report should, in particular, include detailed information on the extent to which each right protected under the Convention is enjoyed in practice and should refer to specific factors and difficulties that might impede the application of the Convention. The Committee also requested the Government to include in its next report statistical data disaggregated by sex.

227. The Committee also requested the wide dissemination in Luxembourg of these concluding comments so as to make individuals aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard.

3. Initial, second and third periodic reports

Antigua and Barbuda

228. The Committee considered the combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Antigua and Barbuda (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3) at its 340th, 341st and 348th meetings, on 10 and 16 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.340, 341 and 348).

229. In her introductory statement, the representative of the State party indicated that Antigua and Barbuda had become party to the Convention on 31 August 1989, at which time the Convention had been fully incorporated in domestic law. She noted that the report before the Committee had been submitted in 1994 and that significant developments in implementation had occurred since then. Accordingly, an addendum had been submitted to the Committee to update the report.

230. The representative indicated that the Women's Desk had been upgraded in 1985 to a Directorate of Women's Affairs, which had responsibility for promoting the social, political and economic interests of women and their development. Pursuant to the Beijing Platform for Action, the Directorate had identified as priority areas of concern the elimination of violence against women, education and training, the eradication of poverty, the encouragement of more women to become involved in the decision-making process and the expansion of general health and reproductive health programmes mainly targeted at young women. To fulfil international and regional commitments, the Directorate's plans to mainstream gender in all government departments/divisions included a training workshop involving heads of ministries, local government officers, non-governmental organizations and heads of department. It had also revised its national Plan of Action for Gender Affairs. The Directorate had recently

organized a forum to publicize the Convention and was planning to introduce courses to encourage women to enter politics and decision-making.

231. The representative noted that several major legal reforms had been introduced or were currently pending or planned. The Sexual Offences Act 1995 and the Maintenance Act were now in force. The family (protection against domestic violence) bill, which would provide for protection orders and orders with regard to the occupation of the matrimonial home, would be debated during 1997 and an equal opportunity act would be introduced in the near future.

232. The representative informed the Committee that sex-role stereotyping remained a problem in Antigua and Barbuda. Within the education system, the need to reduce the stereotyping of roles was accepted. For that reason, both sexes were exposed to similar disciplines and training within the system. However, there was a realization that socialization within the home and wider society also influenced boys and girls to choose traditional skills even when offered a wider range of options. Within the school system, boys were more exposed to technical skills and girls to domestic skills. The Ministries of Education, Health and Labour offered family life education programmes to promote attitudes of equal responsibility of women and men in the care and socialization of children. Domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, battery and rape were prevalent and rarely reported as many men considered such conduct acceptable. The representative noted that a 24-hour domestic violence hotline was scheduled to be introduced in August 1997 by the Directorate, in collaboration with a number of non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

233. The representative informed the Committee that plans currently in place to allow pregnant teenagers to continue their education included working with fathers as appropriate and the provision of functional literacy skills programmes, skills training, parenting classes and family life education, which involved family planning and HIV/AIDS education.

234. The representative indicated that although women constituted the majority of voters in Antigua and Barbuda, the political participation of women remained low and strategies and plans of action would be introduced to reverse that.

235. The representative informed the Committee that there was a high rate of perinatal mortality among women in Antigua and Barbuda. She noted that abortion was illegal in the country, although termination of pregnancy on medical grounds was permitted.

236. The Committee was told that women comprised a significant part of the agricultural population in Antigua and Barbuda. Although they were not subject to direct discrimination, farms operated by women farmers were usually less than half the size of those of their male counterparts and women farmers very often had multiple responsibilities. The Directorate of Women's Affairs provided training and support to women farmers.

237. The representative indicated that the Divorce Act 1997 provided irretrievable breakdown as the sole ground for divorce and allowed for divorce to be sought after one year of marriage. In certain circumstances, men could now be convicted of sexual assault against their wives. The representative noted, however, that women in de facto relationships suffered legal disadvantages.

238. The representative reiterated the strong commitment of Antigua and Barbuda to the elimination of discrimination against women and the implementation of the Convention and the Beijing Platform for Action. She stated that that commitment had been manifested in the preparations for and participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as in the preparations for the presentation of Antigua and Barbuda's report before the Committee.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

239. The Committee welcomed the fact that Antigua and Barbuda had ratified the Convention without reservations. The Committee commended the State party for its report, given that it was a small island State with limited resources.

240. The Committee also commended the State party on its frank and full presentation and the submission of the addendum to its report, which, although presented late in the day, together with the representative's statement, provided a complete picture of the implementation of the Convention in Antigua and Barbuda. The Committee was gratified with the obvious political will in the country with regard to the advancement of women.

241. However, the Committee was disappointed that the report provided no information with regard to the implementation of the Platform for Action and the measures that had been taken by the State party to address the general recommendations of the Committee.

Positive aspects

242. The Committee commended Antigua and Barbuda on the early establishment of the Women's Desk soon after attaining independence, and its later upgrading and expansion to the Directorate of Women's Affairs. The Committee also commended the Government on its intention to upgrade that office further, to a ministry, when a woman was elected to office.

243. The Committee welcomed the introduction of important legislation, including the Equal Opportunity Act, the Divorce Act and the Sexual Offences Act. It looked forward to the results of the introduction of the equal pay and domestic violence bills and noted with appreciation the use by Antigua and Barbuda of model legislation developed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

244. The Committee complimented the State party on the successful measures it had taken to reduce the birth rate.

245. The Committee noted with satisfaction the introduction of gender management systems.

246. The Committee applauded the assurances made by the President that the inequalities in power-sharing at the highest decision-making levels would be redressed.

247. The Committee commended the introduction of the domestic violence hotline and related support services.

248. The Committee welcomed the introduction of measures to address teenage pregnancies and the focus on the situation of the girl child.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

249. The Committee noted that Antigua and Barbuda, being a small island State, seemed to be handicapped by a lack of financial and human resources in the compilation of statistical data, which might be an obstacle in fully implementing the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

250. The Committee was concerned about the fact that few measures had been taken to increase the political participation of women. It noted the absence of women in Parliament and the lack of measures to increase the participation of women in public life generally.

251. The Committee was concerned about the lack of integrated measures to address violence against women.

252. The Committee noted the lack of decision-making power of the Directorate for Women's Affairs.

253. The Committee was concerned about the lack of information in the report on prostitution and trafficking in women.

254. The Committee was also concerned about the continuing selection by female students of stereotypical subjects. It was also concerned about the greater exposure of girls within the school system to domestic skills and boys to technical skills.

255. The Committee was concerned about the low level of occupational achievement by educated women and male dominance in technical and professional fields, on the one hand, and the concentration of women in the lower-paid service sector, including the tourist industry, on the other.

256. The Committee noted that women's concerns had not yet been integrated into the national five-year plan.

257. The Committee was concerned about the situation of rural women and their access to credit.

258. The Committee was also concerned about the continuing illegality of abortion, which would lead to unsafe abortions. It also noted with concern the lack of family planning education programmes and the fact that contraceptives were not covered by medical benefits schemes.

259. The Committee was deeply concerned about the high level of teenage pregnancy.

260. The Committee expressed concern about the high rate of perinatal mortality.

261. The Committee noted the lack of special measures for women with HIV/AIDS, as well as the absence of measures to address drug addiction among women. The Committee expressed the hope that more information would be given about the problem in the next report.

262. The Committee expressed concern about the position of women in common law relationships.

Suggestions and recommendations

263. The Committee recommended that the Directorate of Women's Affairs be elevated to a higher rank and thus upgraded and strengthened.

264. The Committee suggested that gender issues be integrated into the five-year plan.

265. The Committee suggested that the Government of Antigua and Barbuda utilize article 4 of the Convention in accelerating de facto equality for women.

266. The Committee recommended that the Government of Antigua and Barbuda encourage greater participation of women in politics by introducing temporary special measures.

267. The Committee suggested that Antigua and Barbuda introduce appropriate policies and programmes for sex education and family planning education.

268. The Committee recommended that Antigua and Barbuda ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and take the necessary measures for its implementation.

269. The Committee recommended the introduction of programmes to encourage men to take account of their family responsibilities.

270. The Committee noted that culture is a positive vehicle for influencing the advancement of women, and suggested that cultural art forms be used as a vehicle to promote respect for women. The Committee also suggested that the media be used to promote positive attitudes towards women.

271. The Committee urged the Government of Antigua and Barbuda to include in its next report fuller information on the remaining obstacles to the full enjoyment of women's human rights, particularly in relation to article 6 of the Convention and in regard to the legal and economic position of women in common law relationships.

272. The Committee requested the wide dissemination in Antigua and Barbuda of these concluding comments so as to make individuals aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard.

4. Second and third periodic reports

Argentina

273. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Argentina (CEDAW/C/ARG/2 and Add.1 and 2 and CEDAW/C/ARG/3) at its 355th and 356th meetings, on 22 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.355 and 356).

274. In introducing the reports, the representative of Argentina pointed out that the country had undergone profound changes since the National Government had taken office in 1989. During that time, programmes on health, education and social welfare had been transferred to the provinces in order to strengthen the federal system.

275. The reform of the National Constitution in 1994 was an important step towards the achievement of equality for Argentine women. Most international human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, now have constitutional status and are therefore considered complementary to the rights guaranteed in the text of the Constitution. Furthermore, the new Constitution promotes affirmative action in order to achieve de jure and de facto equality. It also reaffirms the need for special security regulations to cover women during pregnancy and lactation.

276. The representative indicated that the National Women's Council had developed a strong policy for monitoring the application of the Quotas Act, which had led even to the presentation of legal actions demanding that lists of political parties which did not comply with the requirements of the law be declared non-official.

277. The representative stressed the high status of the National Women's Council, which was at the ministerial level and reported directly to the President. The Council had recently focused on decentralizing its structure by strengthening the machinery of the provinces. Thus far, provincial councils for women had been established in 9 of the 24 provinces. The National Council also provided technical assistance and training to support the machinery at the provincial level.

278. Regarding the status of women in the labour market, the National Women's Council had established close cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, aimed at promoting women in the labour force.

279. To disseminate information on the rights of women, the National Women's Council had distributed 35,000 free copies of a bimonthly magazine and a CD-ROM containing information on the national and international legislation in the field of women, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action.

280. The representative informed the Committee about measures taken to prevent violence in the family and to assist the victims of violence. Special centres for information and advice and permanent telephone services had been established. An agreement between the National Women's Council and the Ministry of Justice had proposed a training programme for councillors and officials who deal with victims of violence. Together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the National Women's Council had launched a national training programme on violence against women.

281. The representative stated that, at all educational levels, women constituted more than 50 per cent of the students. The Ministry of Education and Culture had established a special entity in charge of women's affairs. Its activities included the revision of curricula, training of staff in the provinces and a research competition relating to women in the educational system.

282. The representative indicated that women's health had improved throughout the last decade. The life expectancy of women increasingly exceeded that of men and maternal mortality rates had gone down. The Ministry of Health had launched training programmes to promote women's health issues.

283. To support rural women, a project providing training and credit facilities for women farmers was set up in 1989.

284. The Secretariat of Natural Resources had declared its commitment to including a gender perspective in all programmes and policies, as requested in the Beijing Platform for Action.

285. The representative informed the Committee that measures had been taken for the full implementation of the integrated system of retirement pensions of housewives approved by Law 24.828. Furthermore, bills had been presented to the National Congress to regulate labour relations concerning domestic employees and their retirement system.

286. The representative concluded by stating that legal measures were in preparation to ensure that women received alimony; a bill creating a national register of those in default of alimony payments had already been passed by the House of Representatives and was pending in the Senate.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

287. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the detailed responses provided by the Government of Argentina to all the questions sent in advance, as well as the updating of the information contained in the second and third periodic reports which the delegation had provided during their presentation.

288. The Committee was very appreciative of the fact that the delegation had reiterated the firm stance taken by the Government, as part of democratization, regarding its willingness to continue to develop a political ideology of equality for women and to ensure the full implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

289. The Committee welcomed the consolidation of democracy in Argentina.

290. The Committee commended the Government for granting the Convention a normative status on a par with the Constitution.

291. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Constitution recognized the competence of the National Congress to adopt affirmative-action laws so as to guarantee equality of opportunity and treatment.

292. The Committee applauded the increase in the number of women parliamentarians, as a result of the effective application of the Quota Act.

293. The Committee applauded the constitutional recognition of the right of persons affected, of the High Commissioner and of associations to take speedy amparo proceedings against acts or omissions that harmed or threatened rights recognized by the Constitution.

294. The Committee also noted with satisfaction the creation of the Federal Women's Council and the National Women's Council, organs entrusted with the task of promoting and coordinating policies of equality.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

295. The Committee expressed concern that women had been adversely affected by the economic reforms and by the amendments to the labour and social-security laws adopted recently.

296. The Committee was concerned about the persistence of stereotypes with regard to the social roles of women and men.

Principal areas of concern

297. The Committee noted that reform of the Penal Code, which would bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention, was still pending.

298. The Committee expressed concern at the fact that the percentage of women pursuing technical careers continued to be low.

299. The Committee was concerned because the reports of the Government of Argentina lacked data and analysis concerning the situation of women subjected to slavery and exploitation for the purposes of prostitution.

300. The Committee was concerned about the very low number of women occupying managerial posts in the private sector.

301. The Committee was concerned about the fact that the rate of unemployment for women (20.3 per cent) was five percentage points higher than that for men (15.7 per cent).

302. The Committee noted with concern that there were no regulations governing the labour relations of domestic employees.

303. The Committee expressed concern at the fact that there were no regulations to penalize sexual harassment in the workplace in the private sector.

304. The Committee was concerned about the fact that, despite economic and social development in Argentina, maternal mortality and morbidity due to childbirth and abortion remained high.

305. The Committee was concerned about women in rural areas having less satisfactory living conditions than those in urban areas.

Suggestions and recommendations

306. The Committee recommended that the Penal Code be reformed as soon as possible to bring it into line with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, its general recommendations and the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

307. The Committee suggested that the Government's plans for equality should be pursued and strengthened and that their results should be evaluated in a more systematic way. Efforts to that end should be reflected in the next periodic report.

308. The Committee recommended that programmes designed to eliminate stereotyping of the social roles of women and men should be sustained and reinforced. Efforts should be made to increase the number of women pursuing technical careers and occupying positions considered to be a male preserve, and to ensure that men share with women the task of caring for the children.

309. The Committee recommended that services for the care of young children who had not yet begun compulsory schooling should be increased and regulated.

310. The Committee suggested that programmes to increase awareness among the police, judges and health-care professionals concerning the gravity of all forms of violence against women should be maintained and strengthened.

311. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to include in its next report legal and sociological information relating to article 6 of the Convention.

312. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to provide information on measures taken to avoid, in both the public and the private sectors, discrimination in access to employment and to enforce ILO Conventions No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and No. 156 concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities.

313. The Committee suggested that labour relations of domestic employees should be regulated.

314. The Committee recommended that sexual harassment occurring in the workplace in the private sector should be penalized.

315. The Committee suggested that, in accordance with its general recommendation 17 (tenth session)[2] and with the Beijing Platform for Action, the Government of Argentina should place a value on unremunerated work and include it in national accounts by means of satellite accounts.

316. The Committee recommended that sex-disaggregated statistics relating to education, employment and social security should be supplemented, in particular by including the number of teachers at the various levels of the education system; the number of students receiving grants; part-time work; the number of open-ended contracts and those of a specific duration; average pay; and average retirement pension.

317. The Committee recommended that programmes designed to promote employment of women, particularly young women, should be intensified.

318. The Committee suggested that increased measures of all types should be taken to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity.

319. The Committee recommended that legislation which penalized mothers who had abortions should be reviewed.

320. The Committee recommended the strengthening of programmes and services directed towards rural women.

321. The Committee requested the Government of Argentina to disseminate these comments widely throughout Argentina, so as to make individuals aware of the measures that have been taken to implement the Convention and the remaining steps required to achieve de facto equality for women.

Italy

322. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Italy (CEDAW/C/ITA/2 and 3)* at its 346th and 347th meetings, on 15 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.346 and 347).

323. In introducing the reports, the representative of Italy stated that Italy's basic strategies with respect to the advancement of women were mainstreaming and empowerment, gender difference being perceived as a resource rather than a disadvantage. She noted that women in Italy were now seeking freedom, independence and personal development and were no longer willing to be constrained in stereotypical social and family roles.

324. The representative noted that Italian women had reached high levels in education and were increasingly part of the workforce. She indicated that, paradoxically, women's increased employment was manifested in the high unemployment rate among women, with women no longer content to revert to their traditional role as housewife.

325. The representative stated that regrettably men's culture and the basic structures of society had not changed at the same pace as women's and that men had sometimes actively opposed women's empowerment.

326. The representative pointed out that basic guidelines for government action for the advancement of women were outlined in the Directive of the Prime Minister adopted on 7 March 1997. The Directive, which was aimed at all levels of public administration, both national and local, had been formulated after extensive consultation and parliamentary debate, and mandated all cabinet members to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

327. The representative informed the Committee that Italy was now going through a period of welfare reform, as well as convergence measures to join the European Monetary Union. She noted that those reforms had the capacity to affect women negatively and for that reason measures to mainstream a gender perspective into welfare reform were essential and were being taken in Italy.

328. The representative drew attention to the measures that had been introduced in Italy to reduce working hours and to create employment, including community-based strategies and the encouragement of entrepreneurship among women, for example by the facilitation of soft loans.

329. The representative indicated that the burden of caring responsibilities in Italian society still fell mainly on women, although there was evidence that men were now taking on their responsibilities in that regard. She made clear that government policies and measures were being introduced to reinforce that change in perspective, including the creation of opportunities for childcare, facilitated by tax credits and incentives for non-profit organizations. In addition, draft legislation on parental leave, as well as measures to provide for flexible work patterns, were being introduced. The representative also noted the innovation of time banks, mostly managed by women, which allowed for the exchange of skills and services in communities.

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* At its 346th meeting, the Committee was informed that its Bureau had waived the general rule requiring simultaneous release of official documents in all working languages of the Committee and agreed to take up document CEDAW/C/ITA/3 - on the basis of the edited English version.

330. The representative informed the Committee that draft legislation to address violence against women in the home had now been prepared and that a Commission had been established to investigate allegations of torture, including rape, perpetrated by Italian soldiers during the 1993 peace mission to Somalia. She noted that Italian women had actively participated in peace missions in the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia and Albania and the entry of women into the Italian armed forces had been an opportunity to redefine the role of the armed forces in the country.

331. The representative indicated that women remained under-represented in decision-making positions and that steps were being taken to address that issue via approaches aimed at empowering women generally. She noted that women were now well represented in decision-making at the local and municipal levels; in particular, women were particularly well represented in municipalities in the south, including Sicily.

332. The representative informed the Committee that educational campaigns, based on the model of a multicultural society, to address racism and xenophobia had been introduced in Italy. She noted that it was not enough to educate the next generation, but that efforts must be made to enable people to learn from each other.

333. The representative concluded by stating that although much remained to be done to implement the Convention in Italy, formal equality had been achieved. Efforts were still required to achieve substantive equality, but she was confident that the combination of the mainstreaming and empowerment strategies would reach that goal. In that regard she stressed that feminism and the women's movement had already transformed Italian society and women's empowerment would lead to further positive change.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

334. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Italy for its high-level delegation headed by the Minister for Equal Opportunities, which it considered an indication of the State party's commitment to the Convention and its appreciation of the work of the Committee.

335. The Committee noted with satisfaction the second and third reports of Italy, which were frank, extensive and detailed. Both reports, particularly the third, exhibited an imaginative and forward-looking policy approach and, together with the oral presentation, explained the logic behind government policies and priorities. Nonetheless, the Committee expressed disappointment that the third report had not been submitted until a late stage thereby precluding its close examination by all members in advance.

336. The Committee was gratified by the excellent oral presentation and the answers to its questions, which were thought-provoking and responded very sensitively to the details and nuances of those questions. The oral presentation, moreover, allowed for reflection on the notion of gender equality as well as presenting the full statistical picture regarding women's position in Italian society.

Positive aspects

337. The Committee welcomed the establishment by the present Government of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities as a coordinating ministry and expressed appreciation for the escalated efforts of that office for gender mainstreaming in the legal, institutional and social aspects of life in Italy. In that respect it especially commended the 7 March Directive of the Prime Minister to focus on gender issues across a wide spectrum of activities.

338. The Committee noted with appreciation the consistent efforts of the Government of Italy to enact legislation against discrimination. In this respect it welcomed the introduction of the recent draft Domestic Violence Act into the Parliament and evaluated this as complementary to the Violence Act of 1996. It welcomed those initiatives as demonstrations of the Government's will to ensure the protection of the human rights of women and combat all kinds of violence directed against them.

339. The Committee welcomed the gender-sensitization and awareness-raising efforts of the Government, aimed at the elimination of xenophobia and racism in Italian society. The Committee was pleased to note the promotion of the role of women as peacekeepers in different parts of the world. In that regard the Committee noted with satisfaction the commitment made, and the steps taken, to confront acts of violence against women allegedly perpetrated by Italian soldiers during peacekeeping missions.

340. The Committee noted with satisfaction the intentions and efforts of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities to ensure gender mainstreaming in the forthcoming welfare reform by moving the focus from the "male breadwinner regime" to overcome the injustice faced by women and to respond better to the needs of the elderly, particularly women.

341. The Committee welcomed the remarkable gains made by Italian women in education and occupational fields, which had significantly enhanced women's economic independence and contributed to their de facto equality in many respects.

342. The Committee welcomed the Government's efforts to promote entrepreneurship among women through provision of credit and via monitoring and coordination of the activities of different public and private agencies in that field.

343. The Committee acknowledged the progressive and humane provisions of Italy's immigration law, and particularly appreciated those provisions of immigration legislation that were protective of the human rights of immigrant women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

344. The Committee noted the persistence of significant cultural, social and economic differences and inequalities between the north and the south as major impediments to the full implementation of the Convention to achieve de facto equality in Italian society.

345. The Committee considered that the feminization of poverty, indicated by data showing that over 60 per cent of families headed by women were under the poverty line, constituted a serious obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention in Italy.

Principal areas of concern

346. The Committee expressed concern with regard to the inadequacy of efforts to combat stereotypes through education and other public means. It was deeply concerned that no substantial initiative had been taken in Italy to rid textbooks and teaching materials of stereotypes and/or towards making women and their contributions to history and society more visible and apparent.

347. The Committee expressed its concern about the persistence of patriarchal norms and stereotypes in Italian society and noted with particular concern the relative lack of attention to that matter in governmental policies and by governmental officials. The State party's attitudes and actions aimed at "utilizing women's own resources" were viewed by the Committee as potentially reinforcing and glorifying stereotypical roles of women, thereby impeding the realization of de facto equality.

348. The Committee noted with deep concern that the presence of women in politics and decision-making positions remained very limited and that political participation had fallen in recent years. Emphasizing the importance of the presence of women in such positions, the Committee was concerned that the Government's opinion of the adoption of numerical goals and quotas as unnecessary had contributed to that situation.

349. The Committee was also concerned about the lack of programmes to sensitize the public, particularly the police, the judiciary and health professionals, to the conditions and needs of victims of domestic violence. The Committee had expressed serious concern that in the absence of such measures the anti-discrimination laws, as well as laws on violence against women, would not be able to combat effectively indirect discrimination, or ensure accurate reporting and rigorous prosecution of all forms of violence against women.

350. The Committee was concerned about the lack of sex-disaggregated data relating to part-time work, and underlined the importance of close monitoring of the subject by, inter alia, keeping up to date sex-disaggregated statistics so as to determine the number of women occupied in part-time employment, which, when their number was disproportionate, was a factor that contributed to indirect discrimination.

351. The Committee was concerned about the inequality in the sharing of "caring responsibilities" and the fact that such responsibilities fell predominantly upon women in Italy, a factor that was particularly acute in southern Italy. It noted with concern the absence of efforts or programmes to encourage Italian men to undertake their fair share of domestic responsibilities, and to care for the children and the elderly.

352. The Committee expressed concern about the lack of statistics and/or studies into the causes of a number of health-related issues concerning women. It noted with serious concern that studies suggested an increase in incidence of lung cancer among women. It also noted the very high incidence of caesarian section deliveries and the failure of women to take advantage of early detection technologies, including mammography and pap smears, and the failure to explain that phenomenon in the report. In addition, the Committee was concerned about the lack of data on occupational health and disease.

353. The Committee expressed particular concern with regard to the limited availability of abortion services for women in southern Italy, as a result of

the high incidence of conscientious objection among doctors and hospital personnel.

354. The Committee noted that while the shift in emphasis from the concept of man as breadwinner that underpinned current welfare reforms was intended to give women autonomy and reduce humiliating financial dependence, it was concerned that those reforms posed real risks for women who had been inter alia homemakers, and not part of the paid workforce, or whose careers had been interrupted by childcare and other responsibilities, and for older women who had little earning capacity.

Suggestions and recommendations

355. The Committee recommended that the Government of Italy continue to implement and strengthen the current measures it is taking to empower women and mainstream gender issues. It encouraged specific affirmative actions targeted to numerical goals and quotas, in particular in those areas such as political and decision-making positions of public life, where women's de facto equality had not been improving at the desired pace.

356. The Committee urged the Government of Italy to take large-scale measures to combat the widespread acceptance of stereotypical roles of women and men, particularly in the south, by alerting the public to the importance of an equitable distribution between women and men of family roles and "caring responsibilities". The Committee deemed it essential that textbooks and teaching material be reviewed and revised to reflect the non-stereotypical roles of men and women.

357. The Committee recommended that Italy expand its existing legislation and/or enact new legislation, where needed, in order to effectively deal with the phenomenon of indirect discrimination. To that end it emphasized the importance of measures to sensitize judges, lawyers and law enforcement personnel to indirect discrimination and to Italy's international obligations, in particular those outlined in the Convention.

358. The Committee requested the Government to provide full information evaluating the impact of legislation and policy concerning equality for women and discrimination in Italy's next report to the Committee.

359. The Committee urged the Government of Italy to embark on public sensitization campaigns in relation to domestic violence in its various manifestations (sexual, physical, etc.) to ensure the protection of human rights of women and the girl child in the family. In particular, the Committee recommended that measures be introduced to encourage complaints and provide mechanisms for effective and timely response to such claims. It recommended that health professionals be trained in the care and management of domestic violence cases. The Committee also recommended the introduction of measures to increase the number of domestic violence shelters throughout Italy.

360. The Committee strongly recommended that the Government take steps to secure the enjoyment by women, in particular, southern Italian women, of their reproductive rights by, inter alia, guaranteeing them access to safe abortion services in public hospitals.

361. The Committee urged the Government of Italy to take the necessary steps to incorporate participation by non-governmental organizations in the preparation of the country's next report to the Committee.

362. The Committee recommended that Italy, as a State member of the European Union, take concrete initiatives to encourage the acceptance by the European Union of the Convention as a fundamental bill of rights for women.

363. The Committee recommended that the State party should ensure that all women had an adequate income and that husbands and fathers were obliged to provide financial support. It also recommended that the Government introduce measures to enforce payment of alimony and of a fair share of the matrimonial assets, including measures which would enable the courts to set aside provisions intended to or having the effect of concealing assets and income and thereby depriving women of the entitlements.

364. The Committee requested the Government of Italy to disseminate these comments widely throughout Italy, so as to make individuals aware of the measures that have been taken to implement the Convention and the remaining steps required to achieve de facto equality for women.

5. Third periodic reports

Australia

365. The Committee considered the third periodic report of Australia (CEDAW/C/AUL/3) at its 352nd and 353rd meetings, on 18 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.352 and 353).

366. The report was introduced by the Assistant Secretary, Office of the Status of Women, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. She explained that the report before the Committee had been prepared in 1993 as a supplementary report to Australia's second periodic report and had been submitted to the Secretariat as Australia's third periodic report in 1994. In stressing her Government's commitment to its treaty obligations, she regretted its inability to prepare a formal supplementary report for consideration by the Committee at the current stage, but noted that Australia had produced an implementation plan for the Beijing Platform for Action which was available to the Committee for information. The detailed answers to the questions on notice would provide the Committee with an up-to-date picture of the status of women in Australia. Noting the high standards of Australia's past reports as well as past practice, she regretted that the present report had not benefited from the involvement of non-governmental organizations. She indicated her Government's intention to combine the fourth and fifth periodic reports for the Committee's consideration at the beginning of the next century.

367. In her introductory statement, the representative of the State party noted that a robust framework of anti-discrimination legislation, positive measures, strategies and programmes had been put in place since ratification of the Convention in 1983. Government-funded services for women, specialized governmental machinery, and attention to women's health, educational curricula, violence against women, employment and women's participation in public life had resulted in a record of achievement which was significant by world standards. At the same time, the Government was aware of the need to address a number of specific areas where equality for women remained to be achieved.

368. As to the reservations Australia had entered to the Convention, the representative noted that while significant progress had been made towards the provision of comprehensive maternity leave, the Government was not in a position to remove the reservation regarding paid maternity leave. On the other hand, a

modification of the reservation regarding "combat-related" employment in the armed forces was being considered.

369. The change in Federal Government following the March 1996 elections had brought a fresh approach. In a strengthening of gender mainstreaming policy, responsibility for gender issues, which had been concentrated in the Office of the Status of Women, had now been extended to all areas of the Commonwealth bureaucracy. Specialist units in line departments had responsibility for enhancing linkages and cooperation, including cooperation with women's organizations. A tight fiscal environment where tax increases or budget deficits were not considered to be means for covering shortfalls had led to difficult choices, but she emphasized the Government's commitment to expanding opportunity and choice for all.

370. While major advances had been achieved in the area of domestic violence over the last 20 years, it remained a significant area of concern, requiring a more comprehensive approach to prevention and response. A National Campaign against Violence and Crime would address, inter alia, domestic violence. A recent programme had assisted in decreasing the incidence of family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The portrayal of violence in the media was also receiving attention.

371. Australia was one of the few countries with a national women's health policy, and new efforts were under way better to understand women's specific health needs. Programmes and services were implemented to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, including resource allocation. In order to address immigrant women's and girls' risk of genital mutilation, legislation to ban the practice had been introduced in most Australian states and territories, and programmes to prevent it had been developed.

372. New temporary measures had been introduced to increase women's participation in politics at the state and federal level. Rather than relying on quotas, the Government had chosen other means, such as mentoring and executive searches, to increase the number of women in politics. The last federal elections had seen a significant increase in the number of women parliamentarians. There had been an increase in the percentage of women in the Cabinet, in state and local government and in political parties.

373. Women's representation in decision-making and management in the private sector was increasing slowly. The Affirmative Action Agency's awards to recognize worthwhile employers' initiatives, as well as other measures, such as education strategies and the waiving of annual reporting requirements for organizations having implemented high-quality affirmative action programmes over three-year periods, were among the strategies used.

374. The Government was committed to greater participation of women in the paid labour market through the promotion of greater flexibility in the workplace, continuing support for childcare and a broadening of options in employment and training. Women's participation in the labour force had grown by 30 per cent in the past 10 years, almost double the increase for men.

375. The new legislative basis for industrial relations, adopted in 1996, included provisions for parental leave and the prohibition of employment termination for reasons of, inter alia, family responsibilities. Other provisions expected to benefit women in particular were the removal of restrictions on regular part-time work and the capacity to formalize individual workplace agreements. An Office of the Employee Advocate had been established

to provide advice and assistance in that regard. She noted that wage gaps between men and women remained, and that a comprehensive income security safety net was available which benefited women to a greater extent than men.

376. In addressing disadvantages experienced by indigenous populations, the Government was committed to reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the larger Australian community. Indigenous women were playing an active role in those efforts.

377. She noted that the High Court Mabo (No. 2) decision of 1992, which had overturned the terra nullius doctrine and recognized the existence of native title, did not refer to gender as affecting the recognition of native title.

378. To ensure better options for indigenous women, recommendations contained in a report submitted to Parliament in May 1997 were being considered by the Government. A number of new initiatives, including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders "Healthy Women - Strong Families" initiative which had been announced at the Beijing Conference, were aimed at improving the health status of that group of women.

379. The representative concluded by saying that the Government of Australia believed that far-reaching cultural and economic changes required the support and acceptance of the community. She pledged Australia's determination to build on its existing achievements so as to ensure that women participated fully in all aspects of life so that their families, their communities and Australia would prosper.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

380. The Committee commended the Government for its past initiatives and efforts to promote and protect the human rights of women nationally and internationally. Australia's leadership for the advancement of women at the Fourth World Conference on Women and its initiative to make it into a "conference of commitment" were particularly noteworthy. The Committee took note of the fact that Australia had prepared a comprehensive national action plan to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and provided a copy to each member of the Committee. The Committee appreciated the comprehensive introductory statement and detailed responses provided to the Committee's written questions by the representative.

381. The Committee noted, however, that the third periodic report did not comply with the Committee's reporting guidelines for periodic reports, and that it essentially reiterated information that had been considered at the time of presentation of Australia's second periodic report in 1994. At the same time, Australia could have combined its third periodic report with the fourth, which was due in August 1996, to enable the Committee to explore more fully the developments that had taken place since 1995 when the third report was submitted.

382. As there seems to be misunderstanding about the status of Australia's reports under the Convention, for the sake of clarification the situation is as follows:

Report	Date due	Date submitted	Considered
Initial report	August 1984	October 1986	1988
Second periodic report	August 1988	July 1992	1994
Third periodic report	August 1992	March 1995	1997
Fourth periodic report	August 1996	Not submitted	
Fifth periodic report	August 2000		

Positive aspects

383. Australia's commitment to the full implementation of the Convention and to the realization of the human rights of women was reflected in such legislative and administrative efforts as the New National Agenda for Women of 1993, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 and Amendment of 1995, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Act of 1986 and its amendments, the review of the Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act of 1986, the annual women's budget statement, the register of women maintained by the Office of the Status of Women, and the Office of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner.

384. The Committee welcomed Australia's pioneering role in addressing violence against women and the measures and strategies that had been put in place to prevent and eliminate it. It commended the Government (Bureau of Statistics) for the establishment of the first comprehensive national statistical profile on the extent and nature of violence against women, and for its strong commitment to reducing the incidence of domestic violence including through preventive measures. The recommendations emanating from a National Domestic Violence Forum in September 1996 and the convening of a National Domestic Violence Summit in 1997 were considered to be important steps towards raising awareness about the issue and contributing to the creation of a climate in which such violence would no longer be tolerated.

385. The Committee welcomed the existence of a national health policy for women, which had been established in 1989, and for which funding was currently allocated for financial year 1998-1999. The policy's participatory approach in providing innovative primary health care and in emphasizing services for disadvantaged groups of women, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and migrant women were commendable, as was the inclusion of women's reproductive health and sexuality among its seven priority issues.

386. Legislation enabling the Government to prosecute Australians who committed sexual offences abroad was also commended.

387. The preparation by the Law Reform Commission of the report on equality of women before the law was an important step in further strengthening the equal access of women to justice and in eliminating discrimination and gender bias in areas such as legal aid, violence against women, immigration and refugee law. The recommendation of the Commission to enact an Equality Act which could lead to the entrenchment of equality legislation in the Constitution would, if implemented, reinforce Australia's leadership role with regard to the equality of women.

388. The Committee applauded the Government's intention to ratify the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention concerning the Committee's meeting time and noted with satisfaction Australia's support for the preparation of an optional protocol to the Convention on a complaints procedure and the initiation of domestic consultations in that regard.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

389. The Committee noted that the changing role of government in terms of public expenditure and the ongoing decentralization of responsibility in a number of areas, including health, from the federal to territorial or state Governments, had had an impact on the legal and practical implementation of the Convention. Australia continued to have two reservations to the Convention, one with regard to paid maternity leave and one with regard to "combat-related" employment in the armed forces, which constituted an obstacle to the full implementation of the Convention.

390. The Committee was aware that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women continued to face discrimination and disadvantages in terms of access to rights, opportunities and resources.

Principal areas of concern

391. The Committee was concerned about the Government's apparent shift in attention and commitment to the human rights of women and the achievement of gender equality. Indications such as the cut by 38 per cent in the budget of the Office of the Status of Women and a similar reduction of funding for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission gave rise to concern. While increased efforts at gender mainstreaming into all sectoral areas were commendable, the Committee was concerned about the weakened role of national machinery in providing policy advice on equality issues and in monitoring the effective implementation of such policies. The discontinuation of the women's budget statement, as well as of the national register of women, was regrettable since both had served as a model for other Governments embarking on similar exercises.

392. The Committee was alarmed by policy changes that apparently slowed down, or reversed, Australia's progress in achieving equality between women and men, such as in housing and childcare programmes, and in employment assistance. It was concerned about the delay in appointing a Sex Discrimination Commissioner and about the Government's declared intention to change its human rights policy and legislation as it pertained to women.

393. The Committee expressed its concern about the possibility that, at a time of fiscal constraint, resources for programmes and policies benefiting women or aimed at overcoming discrimination, for example in health, the provision of legal aid services, training and awareness programmes on violence against women for health, judicial, professional and other workers might be subjected to disproportionate budget cuts.

394. The Committee noted with concern that violence against women, notwithstanding major efforts, remained a central concern to Australian women, 7 per cent of whom experienced some type of violence in the course of a year. It noted the absence of data concerning violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and assessment of programmes directed at reducing such violence.

395. The Committee was also concerned about paedophilia and sex tourism involving Australian men, primarily in Asian countries, and the situation of women brought to Australia as brides.

396. The Committee noted with concern that new legislation on industrial relations providing for the negotiation of individual contracts between employer

and employee might have a disproportionately negative impact on women. Part-time and casual workers, of whom women formed a disproportionate share, were usually in a weaker position than other workers to negotiate favourable working agreements, in particular with regard to benefits. The reservation to the Convention with regard to paid maternity leave, and Australia's non-ratification of ILO Convention No. 103 concerning maternity protection, remained a concern for women workers with family responsibilities.

397. The Committee was concerned at the continuing adverse situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Major causes of concern included a higher incidence of maternal mortality, lower life expectancy, reduced access to the full range of health services, a high incidence of violence, including domestic violence, and high unemployment rates. Their situation, as well as that of migrant women, was further compromised by an apparent rise in racism and xenophobia.

Suggestions and recommendations

398. The Committee recommended that the Government should carefully monitor the impact of recent policy changes in all areas covered by the Convention for inclusion in its next periodic report. To that end, it recommended that Australia conduct analyses of the successes and shortcomings of the new policies with a view to providing data for future action, both in Australia and elsewhere. It recommended that the Government design a long-term strategy aimed at the full implementation of the Convention.

399. In particular, the Committee recommended that an evaluation should be conducted of the Workplace Relations Act of 1996, assessing its impact upon women of different age groups, with different educational levels and in different occupational groups. The Government should assess whether the Act leads to increased or decreased part-time and casual work, and its impact on women workers' benefits and on workers with family responsibilities, particularly women's ability to obtain maternity leave. A similar evaluation and assessment was recommended for Australia's new childcare benefit scheme.

400. The Committee encouraged the Government to assess the benefits of a continuing national women's health policy and to ensure that any further change in that policy did not lead to a decreased access by women, especially vulnerable groups of women, to comprehensive health services. It also recommended that data and indicators on health should be collected, disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, rural/urban areas and other distinctions. Data should also be collected on the impact of the shift in responsibility for health care from the federal to the state level.

401. The Committee recommended that the Convention and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action should be translated for non-English-speaking Australians.

402. The Committee recommended that a comprehensive strategy to eliminate violence against women should be adopted following the National Domestic Violence Summit, with an emphasis on prevention, and with sufficient funding. It also recommended that ways should be found to involve women's groups in the development of strategies to reduce violence in the media, including electronic media, and that they should participate in the development of regulatory codes of practice of the media. The Government should further assess its monitoring and enforcement responsibilities in that regard.

403. The Committee noted the differing state provisions in relation to prostitution and encouraged the Government to assess the effectiveness of the varying measures in reducing the exploitation of prostitution.

404. The Committee encouraged the Government to collect statistical data on the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the workforce, in decision-making, in politics and administration, and in the judiciary with a view to enhancing programmes that would benefit them. It suggested that the Government might include representatives of those communities when it presented its next report to the Committee.

405. The Committee recommended that, in the light of the Mabo and Wik judgements of the High Court, the Government should develop the necessary legislative and policy measures to ensure women's equal access to individual ownership of native land.

406. The Committee encouraged the Government to strengthen its support for women's studies, to provide funding for research and teaching, and to facilitate international academic exchange and cooperation in that field.

407. The Committee encouraged the Government to resume its active and visible participation in international forums on women's equality, such as the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

408. The Committee requested the wide dissemination in Australia of these concluding comments so as to make individuals aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard.

6. Third and fourth periodic reports

Bangladesh

409. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of Bangladesh (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4) at its 357th and 358th meetings, on 23 July 1997 (see CEDAW/C/SR.357 and 358).

410. In his opening statement, the representative of Bangladesh confirmed his country's commitment to the advancement of women, which was a priority commitment of the Prime Minister. The Minister informed the Committee that a number of constitutional and policy measures had been introduced, including the adoption of a National Policy for Women's Development and the elaboration of a National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. These were both ground-breaking documents and would make real changes in women's status and position. The Minister noted that his country had been able to achieve considerable progress in the advancement and empowerment of women, despite serious obstacles.

411. The Minister announced that Bangladesh was withdrawing its reservations to articles 13, paragraph (a), and 16, paragraph 1 (f), of the Convention.

412. Another member of the delegation presented the combined third and fourth periodic report, recalling that the fourth periodic report had been submitted ahead of time as an expression of her country's commitment to the Convention and the promotion of women's rights. She indicated that the report had been formally presented to more than 150 representatives of non-governmental

organizations at a day-long workshop organized by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

413. The representative noted that, according to development indicators relating to life expectancy, education and health, women's status in Bangladesh was lower than that of men. Forty-eight per cent of the rural and 44 per cent of the urban population lived below the poverty line, with women suffering chronic nutritional deficiencies that were aggravated during pregnancy and lactation. A birth rate as high as 4.6 live births contributed to a cycle of high maternal mortality, malnutrition, low birth weight babies and infant mortality. The maternal mortality rate was one of the highest in the world (450 deaths per 100,000 live births). Progress in the removal of disparities was slow since women were subject to discrimination both in cultural practice and in personal law.

414. The representative described interventions and strategies to improve the status of women. The Government, assisted by non-governmental organizations, had taken special measures to promote girls' enrolment and retention at the primary and secondary levels of education, to target girls in non-formal education and to direct them towards non-traditional fields of study. A quota system had been introduced to accelerate recruitment of female primary school teachers.

415. In the field of employment, the representative informed the Committee of the quota system applicable to all types of public employment, reserving 10 per cent of recruitment to gazetted posts and 15 per cent to non-gazetted posts, with a view to facilitating entry and thereby increasing the number of women.

416. The Committee was informed about increases in women's economic participation as a result of self-employment-generating credit programmes run by the Government and non-governmental organizations. The Bangladesh experiment of providing women access to credit, and notably the Grameen Bank model, had been replicated abroad.

417. The representative pointed out that Bangladesh had made history by having two women succeed each other as Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament. The phenomenal turnout of women in the 1996 parliamentary elections showed that women as voters were gaining visibility and political strength. However, very few women had been elected to Parliament through the direct electoral process. Thirty seats had been reserved for women in Parliament, in addition to the 300 seats elected directly from territorial constituencies. The Constitution provided reserved seats in all municipal and local government bodies for women, and this had had a positive effect in ensuring a minimum representation of women.

418. With regard to violence against women, the Committee was informed about the incidence of violence, such as murders of wives as a result of non-payment of dowry, custodial rape, including rape by members of law enforcement agencies, and violence at the community level by pronouncing fatwas and misinterpreting religion. The representative described the multisectoral action programme being undertaken by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to address violence against women, including trafficking in women and girls.

419. Turning to the legal framework, the representative pointed out that the disparity between *de jure* and de facto rights was due to legal illiteracy of women and men and various weaknesses in law enforcement. A Permanent Law

Commission had been established by the Government to review existing laws and enact new ones to safeguard women's rights and to prevent violence against women.

420. The representative described the national machinery and institutional framework to combat gender inequality. The National Council for Women's Development, a 44-member body, was headed by the Prime Minister and comprised ministers and secretaries from several line ministries, public representatives and eminent individuals. The establishment of an Interministerial Coordination and Evaluation Committee, headed by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs, was envisaged. She noted that Bangladesh had been one of the first countries in the world to establish a full-fledged Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, which included a Department of Women Affairs as its implementing arm.

421. The representative informed the Committee that her country had taken serious steps to implement international commitments in the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as legal obligations enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. She concluded by saying that the Convention and the Platform for Action had been translated into Bangla and widely disseminated. The National Action Plan offered detailed action programmes to implement the Platform for Action in Bangladesh.

Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

422. The Committee commended the Government of Bangladesh for its comprehensive, frank and clear written and oral presentations, which followed the guidelines of the Committee and responded to most of the questions raised by experts.

423. The Committee also welcomed the high-level delegation headed by the Minister for Women and Children Affairs, assisted by several distinguished experts from other agencies, academe and non-governmental organizations, which reflected the importance accorded by the Government to the Committee.

424. The Committee especially welcomed and applauded the decision of the Government of Bangladesh to withdraw its reservations to article 13, paragraph (a), and article 16, paragraph 1 (f). It commended the initiative of the Government in leading the way for other countries with similar reservations to also consider lifting their reservations.

425. The Committee noted and appreciated the close collaboration between the Government and non-governmental organizations in the course of the preparation of the report, as well as the efforts of the Government to disseminate its report to a wide range of women's groups and organizations.

Positive aspects

426. The Committee noted with satisfaction the existence of constitutional guarantees of equality between women and men.

427. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the high status accorded the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in the Government.

428. The Committee appreciated the inclusion of women's concerns in all of the development plans of the Government. This was strengthened by the declaration of the Policy on Women's Advancement, the main blueprint of the Government for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

429. The Committee noted the positive impact of the presence of 30 reserved seats for women in Parliament and local bodies, as well as in the public sector. It especially appreciated the fact that Bangladesh was one of the few countries in the world with a female Prime Minister and a female Leader of the Opposition.

430. The Committee noted with appreciation the emphasis placed by the Government on increasing literacy among women and girls, with the aim of achieving education for all by the year 2000.

431. The Committee applauded the Government's efforts to popularize and disseminate the Convention by translating it into Bangla.

432. The Committee appreciated the Government's willingness to collaborate with women's non-governmental organizations in implementing its programmes on women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

433. The Committee expressed its concern over the Government's remaining reservations to articles 2 and 16, paragraph 1 (a). The Committee noted that it regards article 2 as a fundamental and core provision of the Convention, while article 16 is critical to the full enjoyment by women of their rights.

434. The slow economic growth of the country coupled with frequent natural calamities such as typhoons and floods posed serious constraints to the ability of the Government to provide adequate resources for women's programmes and projects.

435. Prevailing stereotyped attitudes and practices justified on social grounds create a social environment for the acceptance of discrimination against women, thus impeding the full implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern

436. The Committee expressed serious concern about the alarming levels of violence against women in all its forms and especially its most cruel forms, such as acid throwing, stoning and dowry death, and the inability of the Government to enforce existing laws effectively, or to provide immediate relief and justice to victims of such violence.

437. The Committee noted with concern that while education programmes had increased the level of literacy among girls and women since the last report, a very large percentage of women and girls still had no access to education.

438. The Committee was concerned about the fact that maternal mortality and infant mortality rates remained high and that available primary health and reproductive health services were still inadequate and often inaccessible to poor, rural and marginalized women. Moreover, family planning services still mainly targeted women, and not enough education on male responsibility in reproduction had been introduced.

439. On the matter of migrant women, the Committee noted from the report the lack of discussion and measures to protect women migrant workers from Bangladesh at all stages of the migration process.

440. The Committee expressed its concern about the continuing prevalence of stereotyped and patriarchal attitudes towards women in society reflected in such practices as son preference that undermine the Government's efforts to achieve equal status of women.

441. The Committee was seriously concerned about the poor working conditions of women workers in both the private and the public sector. It was particularly concerned with the non-implementation of minimum wage levels and the lack of social and health benefits, including paid maternity leave, and the lack of adequate child-care facilities in the manufacturing sector. It noted the lack of government monitoring of the conditions of women in the informal sector.

442. The Committee was concerned at the lack of disaggregated statistical information and the lack of systematic data gathering on birth and marriage registration and incidents of violence against women.

443. The Committee expressed serious concern at the absence of special prisons for women, which posed serious threats to the security and protection of women committed to prison.

444. The Committee noted that although economic and micro-credit programmes existed for rural women, the trend towards globalization and liberalization of trade policies might have an adverse economic impact on the poorest of the poor, especially women in the rural areas.

445. The Committee was concerned about the fact that, while all development plans had included gender concerns and issues, their impact on women had not been adequately monitored and assessed.

446. The Committee noted the absence of adequate information and analysis, as well as programmes, directed at addressing prostitution in general.

447. The Committee noted with serious concern the reported imposition of fatwas, using religious justification to punish women.

448. The Committee was concerned at the fact that despite affirmative action measures to encourage women's political participation, the number of women in decision-making positions was still small.

Suggestions and recommendations

449. The Committee urged the Government of Bangladesh, in order to comply both with its own Constitution and the Convention, to review its remaining reservations to articles 2 and 16, paragraph 1 (a), with a view to eventually withdrawing them.

450. The Committee encouraged the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen its primary health and reproductive health services aimed at substantially improving the health and well-being of women.

451. The Committee strongly urged the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen its enforcement and monitoring of existing laws, policies and mechanisms on violence

against women so as to provide victims and survivors of violence with responsive and effective measures of protection and to prevent further violence.

452. The Committee strongly urged the Government of Bangladesh to set up a separate prison facility and comprehensive programme of rehabilitation for women prisoners.

453. In view of the impact of globalization on rural economics, the Government should give high priority to the issues and problems of rural women, especially their ownership of land and access to credit, loans and skills training in new agricultural technologies, with a view to strengthening their productive and employment capacity.

454. The Committee recommended the strengthening of gender sensitization and training programmes for the judiciary, police and health professionals, particularly those relating to violence against women.

455. To combat social attitudes, prejudices and social and traditional practices that discriminate against women, the Committee strongly recommended that the Government strengthen education and public information programmes geared towards reinforcing more positive images and roles of women in society.

456. The Committee recommended that the Government pay particular attention to improving the wage levels and the terms and conditions of women workers in the export processing zones, as well as in the informal sector.

457. The Committee urged the Government to strengthen its mechanisms to protect migrant women workers from exploitation throughout the migration process, inter alia, by actively exploring bilateral and multilateral initiatives addressing this issue.

458. The Committee recommended that birth and marriages be systematically registered so that laws prohibiting child marriage and polygamy might be rigorously enforced.

459. In responding to the problem of trafficking of women and girls, the Committee recommended the stronger enforcement of the Women and Child Repression Act 1995, as well as provision of adequate assistance to women and girl victims of trafficking. The regional resolution on trafficking agreed to by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Maldives should be sustained and concretized into actual programmes.

460. The Committee recommended that the Government undertake an impact assessment of development plans for women.

461. The Committee strongly recommended more proactive measures to hasten the implementation of education programmes to eliminate female illiteracy.

462. The Committee recommended that research on the root causes and consequences of prostitution be conducted to enable Governments to respond accordingly.

463. The Committee recommended the continuance of affirmative action measures such as quota seats for women in Parliament, in local bodies and in the civil service. This should be accompanied by capability building and skills training to enable women to participate actively in electoral politics as well as in the civil service.

464. The Committee requested wide dissemination in Bangladesh of these concluding comments so as to make individuals aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de facto equality for women and the further steps required in this regard.

Notes

[1] See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/47/38), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/46/38), chap. I.

V. WAYS AND MEANS OF EXPEDITING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

465. The Committee considered ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee (agenda item 7) at its 334th and 359th meetings, on 7 and 25 July 1997.

466. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who presented the report of the Secretariat (CEDAW/C/1997/II/4) and a working paper containing the draft rules of procedure (CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1).

Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group I

467. At its 359th meeting, on 25 July 1997, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group I (CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.I/WP.1).

1. Overdue reports

468. The Committee invited the Secretariat to advise States parties whose reports were overdue that advice on receiving assistance from the United Nations system could be obtained from the Division for the Advancement of Women.

2. Lists of questions for the pre-session working group

469. The Committee decided that the expert designated as country rapporteur should send her introductory report on the most relevant matters relating to the situation of women in that country to the pre-session working group. Responsibility for preparing questions on subsequent reports for the working group would be shared among Committee members, two or three members being given responsibility for each report. Members with other responsibilities, such as the resource person for the working group on the optional protocol and members assigned responsibility for general recommendations or other documents should be relieved of responsibility for preparing questions with respect to periodic reports.

3. Report of the independent expert on the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies

470. The Committee requested the Secretariat to compile the comments of the members of the Committee on the report of the independent expert on the functioning of the human rights treaty bodies for submission to the Committee at its eighteenth session.

4. Concluding comments

471. The Committee decided that the standard format of concluding comments would be: Introduction; positive aspects; factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention; principal areas of concern; suggestions and recommendations.

5. Members of the pre-session working group

472. The Committee decided that the members of the pre-session working group for the eighteenth session of the Committee and their alternates should be:

Members	Alternates
Ms. Emna Aouij (Africa)	Ms. Kongit Sinegiorgis
Ms. Ivanka Corti (Europe)	Ms. Carlota Bustelo
Ms. Sunaryati Hartono (Asia)	Ms. Lin Shangzen
Ms. Yolanda Ferrer Gomez (Latin America)	Ms. Aída González

6. Dates of the eighteenth session of the Committee

473. Consistent with the calendar of conferences for 1998, the eighteenth session should be held from 19 January to 6 February 1998, in New York. The pre-session working group would meet from 12 to 16 January 1998.

7. Reports to be considered at the nineteenth and twentieth sessions

474. The Committee decided that States parties presenting reports at the January session in any year should submit any additional information, including any additional reports, prior to 15 September of the previous year; in the case of the July session, the Committee decided that additional information should be submitted by 30 March of that year (see chap. I, sect. B, decision 17/I).

475. The Committee decided that the maximum number of reports to be considered at each session would normally be eight, drawn from a proposed list of up to 10 countries (see chap. I, sect. B, decision 17/II).

476. Bearing in mind the criteria of date of submission, geographical balance and reports delayed from earlier sessions, the reports of the following States parties should be considered:

Nineteenth session

Initial reports

Czech Republic

Second periodic reports

Nigeria
Panama
United Republic of Tanzania

Third periodic reports

Belarus
Republic of Korea (third and fourth)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Fourth periodic reports

Peru

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee decided to consider the second periodic report of Greece.

Twentieth session

Second periodic reports

Greece
Thailand

Third periodic reports

Austria
Egypt
Finland
Spain

In the event that one of the above-mentioned States parties should be unable to present its report, the Committee decided to consider the fourth periodic report of Sweden.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION

477. The Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 6) at its 334th and 359th meetings, on 7 and 25 July 1997.

478. The item was introduced by the Chief of the Women's Rights Unit of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who presented the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1997/II/3);

(b) Report of the World Health Organization (CEDAW/C/1997/II/3/Add.1);

(c) Report on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (CEDAW/C/1997/II/3/Add.3);

(d) General recommendation 23 on articles 7 and 8 (CEDAW/C/1997/II/5).

A. Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

479. At its 359th meeting, on 25 July 1997, the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group II (CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.II/WP.1) and took the following action:

1. Process for the preparation of general recommendations

480. The Committee decided that there would be a three-stage process for the preparation of general recommendations, as follows:

(a) First, a general discussion and exchange of views on the subject of the proposed general recommendation during an open meeting of the Committee. Specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, as well as non-governmental organizations, would be encouraged to participate in the discussion and to prepare informal background papers as appropriate;

(b) Second, the result of the general discussion would be compiled by a member of the Committee and the Secretariat into an initial draft general recommendation. That draft would be discussed at the next session by Working Group II, which could invite resource persons and non-governmental organizations to take part in discussions as appropriate. The comments of the Working Group would be incorporated into a revised draft which would be distributed to all experts before the next session;

(c) The revised draft would be submitted by Working Group II at the subsequent session for consideration and adoption by the Committee as a whole.

2. Future general recommendations of the Committee

481. The Committee decided that its next general recommendation would be on women and health (article 12 of the Convention). In the preparation of the general recommendation, the Beijing Platform for Action, the report of the

International Conference on Population and Development and other relevant documents would be used. The Committee designated Ms. Shalev to assist in initially integrating information gathered, including information provided by non-governmental organizations at the informal consultation held during the seventeenth session, on 24 July 1997, which would be discussed by the Committee at its eighteenth session in January 1998.

482. The Committee decided that general recommendations on articles 2 and 4 of the Convention would be formulated separately.

3. Contribution of the Committee to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

483. The Committee decided that its contribution to the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should include a written statement on reservations, particularly in the context of article 2 of the Convention. Ms. Silvia Cartwright was designated by the Committee to submit a first draft of a statement relating to reservations, based on all available material, including that available in the Division for the Advancement of Women, for discussion at the eighteenth session of the Committee and adoption at its nineteenth session, bearing in mind the observance of the fiftieth anniversary on 10 December 1998.

4. Open-ended working group of the Commission on the Status of Women on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention

484. The Committee nominated Ms. Silvia Cartwright to act as a resource person to the open-ended working group on the elaboration of a draft optional protocol to the Convention, which would meet during the forty-second and forty-third sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, in 1998 and 1999.

5. General recommendation 23

485. The Committee took note of the final edited text of its general recommendation 23 on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention relating to women in public life (CEDAW/C/1997/II/5) which it had adopted at its sixteenth session in January 1997, subject to final editing (for the text, see chap. I, sect. A, above).

B. Statements by senior United Nations officials

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

486. At the 349th meeting, on 16 July 1997, the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) introduced the organization's report (CEDAW/C/1997/II/3/Add.3), which had been submitted to the Committee under article 22 of the Convention.

487. She said that UNESCO administered 10 projects which related to the 12 critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. These included projects on equal access to education; peace; the media; women's contribution to the management of natural resources and environmental protection; and access of the girl child to education and literacy. Other

projects seek to alleviate the daily work burden of women and girls in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States and Latin America and the Caribbean.

488. The representative noted that the overall work of UNESCO regarding women, girls and gender equality was guided by five resolutions adopted by its General Conference in 1995, which had been held immediately after the Fourth World Conference on Women. Those resolutions reflected UNESCO's commitment to the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, the Beijing Platform for Action, the coordinated and integrated system-wide follow-up to other major conferences and to the principles of the Convention.

489. The representative described the UNESCO Web site on women, and the gender approach of UNESCO's work. That approach would be tested during the preparation of two major UNESCO conferences, the World Conference on Higher Education and the World Science Conference, to be held in 1998 and 1999, respectively. Two other events scheduled to take place early in 1998 would have a significant impact on gender mainstreaming in UNESCO's fields of competence, namely, the preparation of an international campaign to promote the access of women and girls to education as a fundamental human right, as a contribution to the celebration of the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and concentration on women's unpaid work.

490. The representative informed the Committee of the forthcoming expert group meeting on male roles and masculinities in the perspective of a culture of peace, which was expected to contribute to a greater understanding of gender socialization within different cultural contexts; and the proposal of the Government of Luxembourg for a world conference on men and power.

United Nations Population Fund

491. At the 335th meeting, on 7 July 1997, the Director of the Technical and Evaluation Division of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stated that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was an essential instrument in the global effort to empower women and to ensure gender equity and equality. It was also central to the support of efforts with regard to women's right to health, including reproductive health, which was crucial to women's autonomy and to sustainable development.

492. The representative noted that articles 12 and 16 (e) of the Convention were closely linked to the agreements reached by 179 countries at the International Conference on Population and Development held at Cairo in September 1994 and to the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women. He noted that the Programme of Action adopted at Cairo placed reproductive and sexual health and rights at the centre of the population and development agenda, and committed Governments to strive to ensure universal access by 2015 to comprehensive reproductive health care, including family planning and services to protect sexual health.

493. The representative reminded the Committee of the round table on human rights approaches to women's health, with a focus on reproductive and sexual health rights, organized jointly by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and held at Glen Cove, New York, in December 1996. There treaty body experts had discussed ways in which the various human rights bodies could support efforts to protect and promote reproductive and sexual health rights. Among the recommendations of the round table was a request for treaty bodies to incorporate reproductive and sexual rights in their examination of the reports

of States parties, and to use the Cairo and Beijing documents, where applicable, in preparing guidelines, general comments, recommendations and responses to reports.

494. He stated that efforts had been made to follow up the Glen Cove recommendations. In particular, UNFPA was considering ways to involve Committee experts in activities to incorporate human rights education in the UNFPA programming process. He noted that the Fund had also been working with the Division for the Advancement of Women to identify areas of collaboration to strengthen the implementation of the Convention.

495. The representative informed the Committee that the 1997 report of UNFPA entitled The State of World Population listed the following four key components of reproductive rights: the right to reproductive and sexual health, as a component of overall health, throughout the life cycle; the right to reproductive decision-making, including the right of access to the information and the means necessary to exercise voluntary choice in marriage, forming families and determining the number, timing and spacing of one's children; equality and equity for men and women, to enable free and informed choices in all spheres of life, without discrimination based on gender; and the right to sexual and reproductive security, including freedom from sexual violence and coercion, and the right to privacy.

496. He noted that approximately 50 per cent of UNFPA programme resources were devoted to assisting Governments and non-governmental organizations to increase access to, and improve the quality of, counselling and service provisions in the reproductive health area. In the area of population and development strategies, UNFPA provided support for, inter alia, data collection and sociocultural and economic research on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment. In the advocacy area, the Fund emphasized the importance of safeguarding and promoting reproductive rights, gender equality and male responsibility.

United Nations Development Programme

497. Also at the 335th meeting, the representative of the Gender in Development Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated that the commitment of UNDP to the elimination of discrimination against women had a number of dimensions, including at the country level, through the Resident Coordinator system. He noted that UNDP was also working closely with the United Nations system partners in inter-agency working groups and task forces to promote gender equality and the advancement of women. In this regard, the agencies in the Joint Consultative Group on Policy were forging strong alliances to achieve common goals on gender issues at the country level, including through cooperation on advocacy and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

498. The representative stated that inter-agency mechanisms were in place in all regions, including in countries affected by conflict situations, including Afghanistan. UNDP was building national capacity among the 134 countries to strengthen the enabling policy and legal frameworks for gender equality and improving women's access to assets and resources, including decision-making. UNDP was committing financial and human resources to gender equality and the advancement of women.

499. The representative indicated that, at the country level, UNDP was providing support to the implementation of national action plans for accession to and implementation of the Convention. At the regional level, UNDP support was being

provided to sub-Saharan Africa countries to facilitate public awareness and advocacy campaigns, including through the translation of the Platform for Action and the Convention into indigenous languages and the facilitation of the efforts of civil society. In Asia and the Pacific, UNDP was supporting a programme with International Women's Rights Action Watch (Asia/Pacific), aimed at developing women's constituencies with respect to government accountability with regard to the Convention. In Latin America, UNDP assistance was being provided to ensure that legislative reforms addressed the protection of women's rights. In Eastern Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP sponsored a regional programme to assist countries to strengthen their institutional capacities and to establish national and regional networks of non-governmental organizations to address gender issues; while in the Arab States region, UNDP was working to build the capacity of a regional institution, providing support in the areas of training, research, networking and dissemination of information.

VII. PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION

500. The Committee considered the provisional agenda for its eighteenth session (agenda item 8) at its 359th meeting, on 25 July 1997. The Committee decided to approve the following provisional agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Report of the Chairperson on activities undertaken between the seventeenth and eighteenth sessions of the Committee.
4. Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
5. Implementation of article 21 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
6. Ways and means of expediting the work of the Committee.
7. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session.
8. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighteenth session.

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

501. At its 359th meeting, on 25 July 1997, the Committee adopted the report on its seventeenth session (CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1 and Add.1-10), as orally amended.

ANNEX I

States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 25 July 1997

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Albania	11 May 1994 a/	10 June 1994
Algeria	22 May 1996 a/, b/	21 June 1996
Andorra	15 January 1997 a/	14 February 1997
Angola	17 September 1986 a/	17 October 1986
Antigua and Barbuda	1 August 1989 a/	31 August 1989
Argentina	15 July 1985 b/	14 August 1985
Armenia	13 September 1993 a/	13 October 1993
Australia	28 July 1983 b/	27 August 1983
Austria	31 March 1982 b/	30 April 1982
Azerbaijan	10 July 1995 a/	9 August 1995
Bahamas	6 October 1993 a/	5 November 1993
Bangladesh	6 November 1984 a/, b/	6 December 1984
Barbados	16 October 1980	3 September 1981
Belarus	4 February 1981 c/	3 September 1981
Belgium	10 July 1985 b/	9 August 1985
Belize	16 May 1990	15 June 1990
Benin	12 March 1992	11 April 1992
Bhutan	31 August 1981	30 September 1981
Bolivia	8 June 1990	8 July 1990
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 September 1993 d/	1 October 1993
Botswana	13 August 1996 a/	12 September 1996
Brazil	1 February 1984 b/	2 March 1984
Bulgaria	8 February 1982 c/	10 March 1982
Burkina Faso	14 October 1987 a/	13 November 1987
Burundi	8 January 1992	7 February 1992
Cambodia	15 October 1992 a/	14 November 1992
Cameroon	23 August 1994 a/	22 September 1994
Canada	10 December 1981 c/	9 January 1982
Cape Verde	5 December 1980 a/	3 September 1981
Central African Republic	21 June 1991 a/	21 July 1991
Chad	9 June 1995 a/	9 July 1995
Chile	7 December 1989	6 January 1990
China	4 November 1980 b/	3 September 1981
Colombia	19 January 1982	18 February 1982
Comoros	31 October 1994 a/	30 November 1994
Congo	26 July 1982	25 August 1982
Costa Rica	4 April 1986	4 May 1986
Côte d'Ivoire	19 December 1995 a/	17 January 1996
Croatia	9 September 1992 d/	9 October 1992
Cuba	17 July 1980 b/	3 September 1981
Cyprus	23 July 1985 a/, b/	22 August 1985
Czech Republic e/	22 February 1993 c/, d/	24 March 1993
Democratic Republic of the Congo f/	17 October 1986	16 November 1986

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Denmark	21 April 1983	21 May 1983
Dominica	15 September 1980	3 September 1981
Dominican Republic	2 September 1982	2 October 1982
Ecuador	9 November 1981	9 December 1981
Egypt	18 September 1981 b/	18 October 1981
El Salvador	19 August 1981 b/	18 September 1981
Equatorial Guinea	23 October 1984 a/	22 November 1984
Eritrea	5 September 1995 a/	5 October 1995
Estonia	21 October 1991 a/	20 November 1991
Ethiopia	10 September 1981 b/	10 October 1981
Fiji	28 August 1995 a/, b/	27 September 1995
Finland	4 September 1986	4 October 1986
France	14 December 1983 b/, c/	13 January 1984
Gabon	21 January 1983	20 February 1983
Gambia	16 April 1993	16 May 1993
Georgia	26 October 1994 a/	25 November 1994
Germany g/	10 July 1985 b/	9 August 1985
Ghana	2 January 1986	1 February 1986
Greece	7 June 1983	7 July 1983
Grenada	30 August 1990	29 September 1990
Guatemala	12 August 1982	11 September 1982
Guinea	9 August 1982	8 September 1982
Guinea-Bissau	23 August 1985	22 September 1985
Guyana	17 July 1980	3 September 1981
Haiti	20 July 1981	3 September 1981
Honduras	3 March 1983	2 April 1983
Hungary	22 December 1980 c/	3 September 1981
Iceland	18 June 1985	18 July 1985
India	9 July 1993 b/	8 August 1993
Indonesia	13 September 1984 b/	13 October 1984
Iraq	13 August 1986 a/, b/	12 September 1986
Ireland	23 December 1985 a/, b/, c/	22 January 1986
Israel	3 October 1991 b/	2 November 1991
Italy	10 June 1985 b/	10 July 1985
Jamaica	19 October 1984 b/	18 November 1984
Japan	25 June 1985	25 July 1985
Jordan	1 July 1992 b/	31 July 1992
Kenya	9 March 1984 a/	8 April 1984
Kuwait	2 September 1994 a/	2 October 1994
Kyrgyzstan	10 February 1997 a/	12 March 1997
Lao People's Democratic Republic	14 August 1981	13 September 1981
Latvia	14 April 1992 a/	14 May 1992
Lebanon	21 April 1997 a/, b/	21 May 1997
Lesotho	22 August 1995 a/, b/	21 September 1995
Liberia	17 July 1984 a/	16 August 1984
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	16 May 1989 a/, b/	15 June 1989
Liechtenstein	22 December 1995 a/, c/	21 January 1996
Lithuania	18 January 1994 a/	17 February 1994
Luxembourg	2 February 1989 b/	4 March 1989

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
Madagascar	17 March 1989	16 April 1989
Malawi	12 March 1987 a/, c/	11 April 1987
Malaysia	5 July 1995 a/	4 August 1995
Maldives	1 July 1993 a/, b/	31 July 1993
Mali	10 September 1985	10 October 1985
Malta	8 March 1991 a/, b/	7 April 1991
Mauritius	9 July 1984 a/, b/	8 August 1984
Mexico	23 March 1981 b/	3 September 1981
Mongolia	20 July 1981 c/	3 September 1981
Morocco	21 June 1993 a/, b/	21 July 1993
Mozambique	16 April 1997 a/	16 May 1997
Namibia	23 November 1992 a/	23 December 1992
Nepal	22 April 1991	22 May 1991
Netherlands	23 July 1991 b/	22 August 1991
New Zealand	10 January 1985 b/, c/	9 February 1985
Nicaragua	27 October 1981	26 November 1981
Nigeria	13 June 1985	13 July 1985
Norway	21 May 1981	3 September 1981
Pakistan	12 March 1996 a/, b/	11 April 1996
Panama	29 October 1981	28 November 1981
Papua New Guinea	12 January 1995 a/	11 February 1995
Paraguay	6 April 1987 a/	6 May 1987
Peru	13 September 1982	13 October 1982
Philippines	5 August 1981	4 September 1981
Poland	30 July 1980 b/	3 September 1981
Portugal	30 July 1980	3 September 1981
Republic of Korea	27 December 1984 b/, c/	26 January 1985
Republic of Moldova	1 July 1994 a/	31 July 1994
Romania	7 January 1982 b/	6 February 1982
Russian Federation	23 January 1981 c/	3 September 1981
Rwanda	2 March 1981	3 September 1981
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 April 1985 a/	25 May 1985
Saint Lucia	8 October 1982 a/	7 November 1982
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4 August 1981 a/	3 September 1981
Samoa	25 September 1992 a/	25 October 1992
Senegal	5 February 1985	7 March 1985
Seychelles	5 May 1992 a/	4 June 1992
Sierra Leone	11 November 1988	11 December 1988
Singapore	5 October 1995 a/, b/	4 November 1995
Slovakia e/	28 May 1993 c/, d/	27 June 1993
Slovenia	6 July 1992 d/	5 August 1992
South Africa	15 December 1995 a/	14 January 1996
Spain	5 January 1984 b/	4 February 1984
Sri Lanka	5 October 1981	4 November 1981
Suriname	1 March 1993 a/	31 March 1993
Sweden	2 July 1980	3 September 1981
Switzerland	27 March 1997 a/	26 April 1997
Tajikistan	26 October 1993 a/	25 November 1993
Thailand	9 August 1985 a/, b/, c/	8 September 1985

States parties	Date of receipt of the instrument of ratification or accession	Date of entry into force
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	18 January 1994 d/	17 February 1994
Togo	26 September 1983 a/	26 October 1983
Trinidad and Tobago	12 January 1990 b/	11 February 1990
Tunisia	20 September 1985 b/	20 October 1985
Turkey	20 December 1985 a/, b/	19 January 1986
Turkmenistan	1 May 1997 a /	31 May 1997
Uganda	22 July 1985	21 August 1985
Ukraine	12 March 1981 c/	3 September 1981
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 April 1986 b/	7 May 1986
United Republic of Tanzania	20 August 1985	19 September 1985
Uruguay	9 October 1981	8 November 1981
Uzbekistan	19 July 1995 a/	18 August 1995
Vanuatu	8 September 1995 a/	8 October 1995
Venezuela	2 May 1983 b/	1 June 1983
Viet Nam	17 February 1982 b/	19 March 1982
Yemen h/	30 May 1984 a/, b/	29 June 1984
Yugoslavia	26 February 1982	28 March 1982
Zambia	21 June 1985	21 July 1985
Zimbabwe	13 May 1991 a/	12 June 1991

a/ Accession.

b/ Declarations and reservations.

c/ Reservation subsequently withdrawn.

d/ Succession.

e/ Before becoming separate States on 1 January 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia formed part of Czechoslovakia, which State had ratified the Convention on 16 February 1982.

f/ Effective 17 May 1997, Zaire was renamed Democratic Republic of the Congo.

g/ With effect from 3 October 1990, the German Democratic Republic (which ratified the Convention on 9 July 1980) and the Federal Republic of Germany (which ratified the Convention on 10 July 1985) united to form one sovereign State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Germany".

h/ On 22 May 1990 Democratic Yemen and Yemen merged to form a single State, which acts in the United Nations under the designation "Yemen".

ANNEX II

Membership of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Name of member	Country of nationality
Charlotte Abaka*	Ghana
Ayse Feride Acar**	Turkey
Emna Aouij*	Tunisia
Tendai Ruth Bare*	Zimbabwe
Desiree Patricia Bernard*	Guyana
Carlota Bustelo García del Real**	Spain
Silvia Rose Cartwright**	New Zealand
Miriam Yolanda Estrada Castillo*	Ecuador
Ivanka Corti*	Italy
Yolanda Ferrer Gómez**	Cuba
Aída González Martínez**	Mexico
Sunaryati Hartono*	Indonesia
Aurora Javate de Dios*	Philippines
Salma Khan**	Bangladesh
Yung-Chung Kim**	Republic of Korea
Lin Shangzhen*	China
Ahoua Ouedraogo**	Burkina Faso
Anne Lise Ryel**	Norway
Ginko Sato*	Japan
Hanna Beate Schöpp-Schilling**	Germany
Carmel Shalev*	Israel
Kongit Sinegiorgis**	Ethiopia
Mervat Tallawy*	Egypt

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* Term of office expires in 1998.

** Term of office expires in 2000.

ANNEX III

Documents before the Committee at its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions

A. Sixteenth session

Document number	Title or description
CEDAW/C/1997/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1997/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1997/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1997/3/Add.2	Report of the International Labour Organization
CEDAW/C/1997/3/Add.3	Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/1997/4	Report of the Secretariat on reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEDAW/C/1997/5	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1997/CRP.1 and Corr.1 and Add.1-5	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1997/INF.1/Rev.1	List of participants
CEDAW/C/1997/L.1 and Add.1-12	Draft report of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.1	Draft rules of procedure
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.I/WP.2 and Add.1	Report of Working Group I
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.II/WP.1	Draft general recommendation on articles 7 and 8
CEDAW/C/1997/WG.II/WP.2 and Corr.1 and Add.1-3	Report of Working Group II

	Reports of States parties
CEDAW/C/CAN/3	Third periodic report of Canada
CEDAW/C/CAN/4	Fourth periodic report of Canada
CEDAW/C/DEN/3	Third periodic report of Denmark
CEDAW/C/MOR/1	Initial report of Morocco
CEDAW/C/PHI/3	Third periodic report of the Philippines
CEDAW/C/PHI/4	Fourth periodic report of the Philippines
CEDAW/C/SVN/1	Initial report of Slovenia
CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1	Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3	Combined second and third periodic reports of Turkey
CEDAW/C/VEN/3	Third periodic report of Venezuela

B. Seventeenth session

Document number	Title or description
CEDAW/C/1997/II/1	Provisional agenda and annotations
CEDAW/C/1997/II/2	Report of the Secretary-General on the status of submission of reports by States parties under article 18 of the Convention
CEDAW/C/1997/II/3	Note by the Secretary-General on reports of specialized agencies on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities
CEDAW/C/1997/II/3/Add.1	Report of the World Health Organization
CEDAW/C/1997/II/3/Add.3	Report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CEDAW/C/1997/II/4	Report of the Secretariat on ways and means of improving the work of the Committee
CEDAW/C/1997/II/5	Report of the Secretariat on draft general recommendation on articles 7 and 8
CEDAW/C/1997/II/CRP.1 and Add.1-4	Report of the pre-session working group
CEDAW/C/1997/II/INF.1/Rev.1	List of participants
CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1 and Add.1-10	Draft report of the Committee

CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.I/WP.1	Report of Working Group I
CEDAW/C/1997/II/WG.II/WP.1	Report of Working Group II

Reports of States parties

CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3	Combined initial, second and third periodic reports of Antigua and Barbuda
CEDAW/C/ARG/2 and Add.1 and 2	Second periodic report of Argentina
CEDAW/C/ARG/3	Third periodic report of Argentina
CEDAW/C/ARM/1 and Corr.1	Initial report of Armenia
CEDAW/C/AUL/3	Third periodic report of Australia
CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4	Combined third and fourth periodic reports of Bangladesh
CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2	Combined initial and second periodic reports of Israel
CEDAW/C/ITA/2	Second periodic report of Italy
CEDAW/C/ITA/3	Third periodic report of Italy
CEDAW/C/LUX/1	Initial report of Luxembourg
CEDAW/C/LUX/2	Second periodic report of Luxembourg
CEDAW/C/NAM/1	Initial report of Namibia

ANNEX IV

Status of submission and consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as at 25 July 1997

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
		A. Initial reports	
Albania	10 June 1995		
Algeria	21 June 1997		
Andorra	14 February 1998		
Angola	17 October 1987		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1990	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1986	6 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.39)	Seventh (1988)
Armenia	13 October 1994	30 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1) 10 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/ARM/1/Corr.1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1984	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.40)	Seventh (1988)
Austria	30 April 1983	20 October 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.17)	Fourth (1985)
Azerbaijan	9 August 1996	11 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/AZE/1)	
Bahamas	5 November 1994		
Bangladesh	6 December 1985	12 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.34)	Sixth (1987)
Barbados	3 September 1982	11 April 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.64)	Eleventh (1992)
Belarus	3 September 1982	4 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.5)	Second (1983)
Belgium	9 August 1986	20 July 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.53)	Eighth (1989)
Belize	15 June 1991	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1993		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Bhutan	30 September 1982		
Bolivia	8 July 1991	8 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1) 26 August 1993 (CEDAW/C/BOL/1/Add.1)	Fourteenth (1995)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1 October 1994		
Botswana	12 September 1997		
Brazil	2 March 1985		
Bulgaria	10 March 1983	13 June 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.15)	Fourth (1985)
Burkina Faso	13 November 1988	24 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.67)	Tenth (1991)
Burundi	7 February 1993		
Cambodia	14 November 1993		
Cameroon	22 September 1995		
Canada	9 January 1983	15 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.16)	Fourth (1985)
Cape Verde	3 September 1982		
Central African Republic	21 July 1992		
Chad	9 July 1996		
Chile	6 January 1991	3 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/CHI/1)	Fourteenth (1995)
China	3 September 1982	25 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.14)	Third (1984)
Colombia	18 February 1983	16 January 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.32)	Sixth (1987)
Comoros	30 November 1995		
Congo	25 August 1983		
Costa Rica	4 May 1987		
Côte d'Ivoire	17 January 1997		
Croatia	9 October 1993	10 January 1995 (CEDAW/C/CRO/1)	
Cuba	3 September 1982	27 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.4)	Second (1983)
Cyprus	22 August 1986	2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Czech Republic	24 March 1994	30 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CZE/1)	
Denmark	21 May 1984	30 July 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.22)	Fifth (1986)
Dominica	3 September 1982		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1983	2 May 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.37)	Seventh (1988)
Ecuador	9 December 1982	14 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.23)	Fifth (1986)
Egypt	18 October 1982	2 February 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.10)	Third (1984)
El Salvador	18 September 1982	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.19)	Fifth (1986)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1985	16 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.50)	Eighth (1989)
Eritrea	5 October 1996		
Estonia	20 November 1992		
Ethiopia	10 October 1982	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Fiji	27 September 1996		
Finland	4 October 1987	16 February 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.56)	Eighth (1989)
France	13 January 1985	13 February 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.33)	Sixth (1987)
Gabon	20 February 1984	19 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.54)	Eighth (1989)
Gambia	16 May 1994		
Georgia	25 November 1995		
Germany	9 August 1986	15 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.59)	Ninth (1990)
Ghana	1 February 1987	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)
Greece	7 July 1984	5 April 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.28)	Sixth (1987)
Grenada	29 September 1991		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Guatemala	11 September 1983	2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1) 7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/ Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994) Thirteenth (1994)
Guinea	8 September 1983		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1986		
Guyana	3 September 1982	23 January 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.63)	Thirteenth (1994)
Haiti	3 September 1982		
Honduras	2 April 1984	3 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.44)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1982	20 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.3)	Third (1984)
Iceland	18 July 1986	5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
India	8 August 1994		
Indonesia	13 October 1985	17 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.36)	Seventh (1988)
Iraq	12 September 1987	16 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.66/Rev.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Ireland	22 January 1987	18 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.47)	Eighth (1989)
Israel	2 November 1992	12 January 1994 b/ 7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Italy	10 July 1986	20 October 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.62)	Tenth (1991)
Jamaica	18 November 1985	12 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.38)	Seventh (1988)
Japan	25 July 1986	13 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.48)	Seventh (1988)
Jordan	31 July 1993		
Kenya	8 April 1985	4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)	Twelfth (1993)
Kuwait	1 October 1995		
Kyrgyzstan	12 March 1998		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1982		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Latvia	14 May 1993		
Lebanon	21 May 1998		
Lesotho	21 September 1996		
Liberia	16 August 1985		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1990	18 February 1991 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1) 4 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/LIB/1/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Liechtenstein	21 January 1997		
Lithuania	17 February 1995		
Luxembourg	4 March 1990	13 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/LUX/1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Madagascar	16 April 1990	21 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65) 8 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.65/Rev.2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Malawi	11 April 1988	15 July 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.58)	Ninth (1990)
Malaysia	4 August 1996		
Maldives	1 July 1994		
Mali	10 October 1986	13 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.43)	Seventh (1988)
Malta	7 April 1992		
Mauritius	8 August 1985	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Mexico	3 September 1982	14 September 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.2)	Second (1983)
Mongolia	3 September 1982	18 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.20)	Fifth (1986)
Morocco	21 July 1994	14 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/MOR/1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Mozambique	16 May 1998		
Namibia	23 December 1993	4 November 1996 (CEDAW/C/NAM/1)	Seventeenth (1997)
Nepal	22 May 1992		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Netherlands	22 August 1992	19 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NET/1) 17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.1) 20 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.2) 9 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NET/1/Add.3)	Thirteenth (1994)
New Zealand	9 February 1986	3 October 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.41)	Seventh (1988)
Nicaragua	26 November 1982	22 September 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.55)	Eighth (1989)
Nigeria	13 July 1986	1 April 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.49)	Seventh (1987)
Norway	3 September 1982	18 November 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.7)	Third (1984)
Pakistan	11 April 1997		
Panama	28 November 1982	12 December 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.9)	Fourth (1985)
Papua New Guinea	11 February 1996		
Paraguay	6 May 1988	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1983	14 September 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.60)	Ninth (1990)
Philippines	4 September 1982	22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.6)	Third (1984)
Poland	3 September 1982	10 October 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.31)	Sixth (1987)
Portugal	3 September 1982	19 July 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.21)	Fifth (1986)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1986	13 March 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.35)	Sixth (1987)
Republic of Moldova	31 July 1995		
Romania	6 February 1983	14 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.45)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.12)	Second (1983)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Rwanda	3 September 1982	24 May 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.13)	Third (1984)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1986		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1983		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1982	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Samoa	25 October 1993		
Senegal	7 March 1986	5 November 1986 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.42)	Seventh (1988)
Seychelles	4 June 1993		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1989		
Singapore	4 November 1996		
Slovakia	27 June 1994	29 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/SVK/1)	
Slovenia	5 August 1993	23 November 1993 (CEDAW/C/SVN/1)	Sixteenth (1997)
South Africa	14 January 1997		
Spain	4 February 1985	20 August 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.30)	Sixth (1987)
Sri Lanka	4 November 1982	7 July 1985 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.29)	Sixth (1967)
Suriname	31 March 1994		
Sweden	3 September 1982	22 October 1982 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.8)	Second (1983)
Switzerland	26 April 1998		
Tajikistan	25 October 1994		
Thailand	8 September 1986	1 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.51)	Ninth (1990)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	17 February 1995		
Togo	26 October 1984		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1991		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Tunisia	20 October 1986	17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Turkey	19 January 1987	27 January 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.46)	Ninth (1990)
Turkmenistan	31 May 1998		
Uganda	21 August 1986	1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Ukraine	3 September 1982	2 March 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.11)	Second (1983)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1987	25 June 1987 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.52)	Ninth (1990)
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1986	9 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.57)	Ninth (1990)
Uruguay	8 November 1982	23 November 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.27)	Seventh (1988)
Uzbekistan	18 August 1996		
Vanuatu	8 October 1996		
Venezuela	1 June 1984	27 August 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.24)	Fifth (1986)
Viet Nam	19 March 1983	2 October 1984 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.25)	Fifth (1986)
Yemen	29 June 1985	23 January 1989 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.61)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1983	3 November 1983 (CEDAW/C/5/Add.18)	Fourth (1985)
Zaire	16 November 1987	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/1)	
Zambia	21 July 1986	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1992	28 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZWE/1)	

B. Second periodic reports

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Angola	17 October 1991		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1994	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Argentina	14 August 1990	13 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2) 27 May 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1) 19 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1988	24 July 1992 (CEDAW/C/AUL/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Austria	30 April 1987	18 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.27)	Tenth (1991)
Bangladesh	6 December 1989	23 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.30)	Twelfth (1993)
Barbados	3 September 1986	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Belarus	3 September 1986	3 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.5)	Eighth (1989)
Belgium	9 August 1990	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/BEL/2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Belize	15 June 1995	19 June 1996 (CEDAW/C/BLZ/1-2)	
Benin	11 April 1997		
Bhutan	30 September 1986		
Bolivia	8 July 1995		
Brazil	2 March 1989		
Bulgaria	10 March 1987	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	
Burkina Faso	13 November 1992		
Burundi	7 February 1997		
Canada	9 January 1987	20 January 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.11)	Ninth (1990)
Cape Verde	3 September 1986		
China	3 September 1986	22 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.26)	Eleventh (1992)
Chile	6 January 1995	9 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/CHI/2)	
Colombia	18 February 1987	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3) 2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Congo	25 August 1987		
Costa Rica	4 May 1991		
Cuba	3 September 1986	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1990	2 February 1994 (CEDAW/C/CYP/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Czech Republic	24 March 1998		
Denmark	21 May 1988	2 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.14)	Tenth (1991)
Dominica	3 September 1986		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1987	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	
Ecuador	9 December 1986	28 May 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.31)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1986	19 December 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.2)	Ninth (1990)
El Salvador	18 September 1986	18 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.12)	Eleventh (1992)
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1989	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Estonia	20 November 1996		
Ethiopia	10 October 1986	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1991	9 February 1993 (CEDAW/C/FIN/2)	Fourteenth (1995)
France	13 January 1989	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/FRA/2 and Rev.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Gabon	20 February 1988		
Germany	9 August 1990	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1991	29 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/GHA/1-2)	Eleventh (1992)
Greece	7 July 1988	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Grenada	29 September 1995		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Guatemala	11 September 1987	2 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2 and Corr.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
		7 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/GUA/1-2/Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Guinea	8 September 1987		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1990		
Guyana	3 September 1986		
Haiti	3 September 1986		
Honduras	2 April 1988	28 October 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.9)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1986	29 September 1986 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.1)	Seventh (1988)
Iceland	18 July 1990	5 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/ICE/1-2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Indonesia	13 October 1989	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	
Iraq	12 September 1991		
Ireland	22 January 1991		
Israel	2 November 1996	7 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/ISR/1-2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Italy	10 July 1990	1 March 1994 (CEDAW/C/ITA/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1989		
Japan	25 July 1990	21 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/JPN/2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Kenya	8 April 1989	4 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/KEN/1-2)	Twelfth (1993)
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1986		
Latvia	14 May 1997		
Liberia	16 August 1989		
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	15 June 1994		
Luxembourg	4 March 1994	8 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/LUX/2)	Seventeenth (1997)
Madagascar	16 April 1994		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Malawi	11 April 1992		
Mali	10 October 1990		
Malta	7 April 1996		
Mauritius	8 August 1989	23 February 1992 (CEDAW/C/MAR/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Mexico	3 September 1986	3 December 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.10)	Ninth (1990)
Mongolia	3 September 1986	17 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.7)	Ninth (1990)
Nepal	22 May 1996		
Netherlands	22 August 1996		
New Zealand	9 February 1990	3 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2) 27 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/NZE/2/Add.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Nicaragua	26 November 1986	16 March 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.20)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1990	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	
Norway	3 September 1986	23 June 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.15)	Tenth (1991)
Panama	28 November 1986	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	
Paraguay	6 May 1992	4 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2) 23 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.1) 20 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/PAR/1-2/Add.2)	Fifteenth (1996)
Peru	13 October 1987	13 February 1990 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.29)	Fourteenth (1995)
Philippines	4 September 1986	12 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.17)	Tenth (1991)
Poland	3 September 1986	17 November 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.16)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1986	18 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.22)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1990	19 December 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.28 and Corr.1)	Twelfth (1993)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Romania	6 February 1987	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1986	10 February 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.4)	Eighth (1989)
Rwanda	3 September 1986	7 March 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.13)	Tenth (1991)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1990		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1987		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1986	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Senegal	7 March 1990	23 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/SEN/2 and Amend.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Seychelles	4 June 1997		
Sierra Leone	11 December 1993		
Spain	4 February 1989	9 February 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.19)	Eleventh (1992)
Sri Lanka	4 November 1986	29 December 1988 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.18)	Eleventh (1992)
Sweden	3 September 1986	10 March 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.6)	Seventh (1988)
Thailand	8 September 1990	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
Togo	26 October 1988		
Trinidad and Tobago	11 February 1995		
Tunisia	20 October 1990	17 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/TUN/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Turkey	19 January 1991	7 February 1994 b/ 3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1990	1 June 1992 (CEDAW/C/UGA/1-2)	Fourteenth (1995)
Ukraine	3 September 1986	13 August 1987 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.8)	Ninth (1990)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1991	11 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UK/2 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1990	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	
Uruguay	8 November 1986		
Venezuela	1 June 1988	18 April 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.21)	Eleventh (1992)
Viet Nam	19 March 1987		
Yemen	29 June 1989	8 June 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.24 and Amend.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1987	31 May 1989 (CEDAW/C/13/Add.23)	Tenth (1991)
Zaire	16 November 1991	24 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ZAR/2)	
Zambia	21 July 1990	6 March 1991 (CEDAW/C/ZAM/1-2)	Thirteenth (1994)
Zimbabwe	12 June 1996		

C. Third periodic reports

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Angola	17 October 1995		
Antigua and Barbuda	31 August 1998	21 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Argentina	14 August 1994	1 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/ARG/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Australia	27 August 1992	1 March 1995 (CEDAW/C/AUL/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Austria	30 April 1991	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1993	26 January 1993 b/ 27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1990	4 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/BAR/2-3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Belarus	3 September 1990	1 July 1993 (CEDAW/C/BLR/3)	
Belgium	9 August 1994		
Bhutan	30 September 1990		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Brazil	2 March 1993		
Bulgaria	10 March 1991	6 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/BGR/2-3)	
Burkina Faso	13 November 1996		
Canada	9 January 1991	9 September 1992 (CEDAW/C/CAN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1990		
China	3 September 1990	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	16 February 1991	14 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3) 2 September 1993 (CEDAW/C/COL/2-3/Rev.1)	Thirteenth (1994)
Congo	25 August 1991		
Costa Rica	4 May 1995		
Cuba	3 September 1990	13 March 1992 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3) 30 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/CUB/2-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Cyprus	22 August 1994		
Denmark	21 May 1992	7 May 1993 (CEDAW/C/DEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Dominica	3 September 1990		
Dominican Republic	2 October 1991	26 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/DOM/2-3)	
Ecuador	9 December 1990	23 December 1991 (CEDAW/C/ECU/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Egypt	18 October 1990	30 January 1996 (CEDAW/C/EGY/3)	
El Salvador	18 September 1990		
Equatorial Guinea	22 November 1993	6 January 1994 (CEDAW/C/GNQ/2-3)	
Ethiopia	10 October 1990	22 April 1993 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3) 16 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Finland	4 October 1995	28 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/FIN/3)	
France	13 January 1993		
Gabon	20 February 1992		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Germany	9 August 1994	8 October 1996 (CEDAW/C/DEU/2-3)	
Ghana	1 February 1995		
Greece	7 July 1992	1 March 1996 (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3)	
Guatemala	11 September 1991		
Guinea	8 September 1991		
Guinea-Bissau	22 September 1994		
Guyana	3 September 1990		
Haiti	3 September 1990		
Honduras	2 April 1992	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/HON/3)	Eleventh (1992)
Hungary	3 September 1990	4 April 1991 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3) 3 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/HUN/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
Iceland	3 July 1994		
Indonesia	13 October 1993	6 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/IDN/2-3)	
Iraq	12 September 1995		
Ireland	22 January 1995		
Italy	10 July 1994	21 June 1997 (CEDAW/C/ITA/3)	Seventeenth (1997)
Jamaica	18 November 1993		
Japan	25 July 1994	28 October 1993 (CEDAW/C/JPN/3)	Thirteenth (1994)
Kenya	8 April 1993		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1990		
Liberia	16 August 1993		
Malawi	11 April 1996		
Mali	10 October 1994		
Mauritius	8 August 1993		
Mexico	3 September 1990	1 December 1992 (CEDAW/C/MEX/3)	
Mongolia	3 September 1990		
New Zealand	9 February 1994		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Nicaragua	26 November 1990	15 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/NIC/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Nigeria	13 July 1994	13 February 1997 (CEDAW/C/NGA/2-3)	
Norway	3 September 1990	25 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/NOR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Panama	28 November 1990	17 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/PAN/2-3)	
Paraguay	6 May 1996		
Peru	13 October 1991	25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)	
Philippines	4 September 1990	20 January 1993 (CEDAW/C/PHI/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Poland	3 September 1990	22 November 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.2)	Tenth (1991)
Portugal	3 September 1990	10 December 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.3)	Tenth (1991)
Republic of Korea	26 January 1994	8 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/KOR/3)	
Romania	6 February 1991	19 October 1992 (CEDAW/C/ROM/2-3)	Twelfth (1993)
Russian Federation	3 September 1990	24 July 1991 (CEDAW/C/USR/3)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1990	18 January 1991 (CEDAW/C/RWA/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Saint Kitts and Nevis	25 May 1994		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1991		
Senegal	7 March 1994		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1990	27 September 1991 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3) 28 July 1994 (CEDAW/C/STV/1-3/Add.1)	Sixteenth (1997)
Spain	4 February 1993		
Sri Lanka	4 November 1990		
Sweden	3 September 1990	3 October 1990 (CEDAW/C/18/Add.1)	Twelfth (1993)
Thailand	8 September 1994	3 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/THA/2-3)	
Togo	26 October 1992		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Tunisia	20 October 1994		
Turkey	19 January 1995	3 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TUR/2-3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Uganda	21 August 1994		
Ukraine	3 September 1990	31 May 1991 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3) 21 November 1995 (CEDAW/C/UKR/3/Add.1)	Fifteenth (1996)
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7 May 1995	16 August 1995 (CEDAW/C/UK/3)	
United Republic of Tanzania	19 September 1994	25 September 1996 (CEDAW/C/TZA/2-3)	
Uruguay	8 November 1990		
Venezuela	1 June 1992	8 February 1995 (CEDAW/C/VEN/3)	Sixteenth (1997)
Viet Nam	19 March 1991		
Yemen	29 June 1993	13 November 1992 (CEDAW/C/YEM/3)	Twelfth (1993)
Yugoslavia	28 March 1991		
Zaire	16 November 1995		
Zambia	21 July 1994		

D. Fourth periodic reports

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Australia	27 August 1996		
Austria	30 April 1995	25 April 1997 (CEDAW/C/AUT/3-4)	
Bangladesh	6 December 1997	27 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/BGD/3-4)	Seventeenth (1997)
Barbados	3 September 1994		
Belarus	3 September 1994		
Bhutan	30 September 1994		
Brazil	2 March 1997		
Bulgaria	10 March 1995		
Canada	9 January 1995	2 October 1995 (CEDAW/C/CAN/4)	Sixteenth (1997)
Cape Verde	3 September 1994		

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
China	3 September 1994	29 May 1997 (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4)	
Colombia	18 February 1995	8 July 1997 (CEDAW/C/COL/4)	
Congo	25 August 1995		
Cuba	3 September 1994		
Denmark	21 May 1996	9 January 1997 (CEDAW/C/DEN/4)	
Dominican Republic	2 October 1995		
Ecuador	9 December 1994		
Egypt	18 October 1994		
El Salvador	18 October 1994		
Ethiopia	10 October 1994		
France	13 January 1997		
Gabon	20 February 1996		
Greece	7 July 1996		
Guatemala	11 September 1995		
Guinea	8 September 1995		
Guyana	3 September 1994		
Haiti	3 September 1994		
Honduras	2 April 1996		
Hungary	3 September 1994		
Kenya	8 April 1997		
Lao People's Democratic Republic	13 September 1994		
Mexico	3 September 1994	7 March 1997 (CEDAW/C/MEX/4)	
Mongolia	3 September 1994		
Nicaragua	26 November 1994		
Norway	3 September 1994	1 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/NOR/4)	Fourteenth (1995)
Panama	28 November 1994		
Peru	13 October 1995	25 November 1994 (CEDAW/C/PER/3-4)	

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Philippines	4 September 1994	22 April 1996 (CEDAW/C/PHI/4)	Sixteenth (1997)
Poland	3 September 1994		
Portugal	3 September 1994		
Romania	6 February 1995		
Russian Federation	3 September 1994	31 August 1994 (CEDAW/C/USR/4)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda	3 September 1994		
Saint Lucia	7 November 1995		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3 September 1994		
Spain	4 February 1997		
Sri Lanka	4 November 1994		
Sweden	3 September 1994	21 May 1996 (CEDAW/C/SWE/4)	
Togo	26 October 1996		
Ukraine	3 November 1994		
Uruguay	8 November 1994		
Venezuela	1 June 1996		
Viet Nam	19 March 1995		
Yemen	29 June 1997		
Yugoslavia	28 March 1995		

E. Reports submitted on an exceptional basis

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1 February 1994 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.253)	Thirteenth (1994)
Croatia		15 September 1994 (CEDAW/C/CRO/SP.1)	Fourteenth (1995)
Rwanda		31 January 1996 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.306)	Fifteenth (1996)
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)		2 December 1993 (CEDAW/C/YUG/SP.1) 2 February 1994 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.254)	Thirteenth (1994)

States parties	Date due a/	Date of submission	Considered by Committee (session (year))
Zaire		16 January 1997 (oral report; see CEDAW/C/SR.317)	Sixteenth (1997)

a/ One year prior to the due date, the Secretary-General invites the State party to submit its report.

b/ Report withdrawn.